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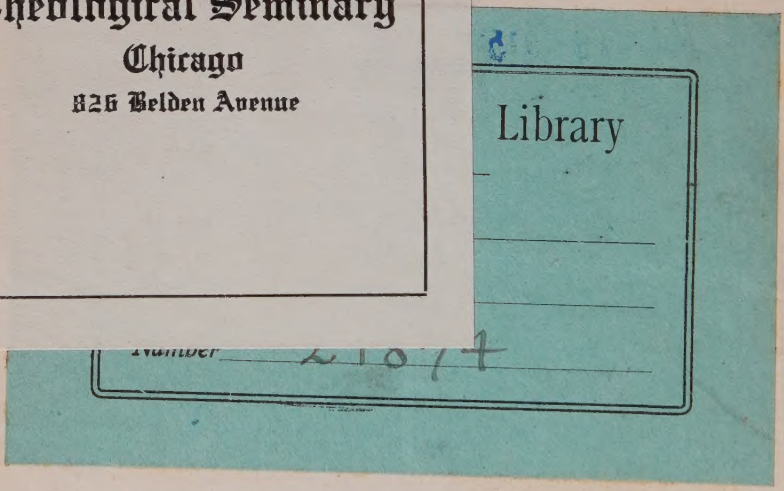

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THE MINISTRY OF THE SUNDAY-SCHOOL

BY

T. HARWOOD PATTISON

Professor in Rochester Theological Seminary

When men do anything for God, the very least thing, they never know where it will end, nor what amount of work it will do for him. Love's secret, therefore, is to be always doing things for God, and not to mind because they are such very little ones.

—*Frederick William Faber*

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PREFACE

This book has grown out of the "Ridley Lectures" on "The Minister in Relation to Children and Sunday-schools," delivered at Regent's Park College, London, in the summer of 1900. The same course was given before the students of the Hartford Theological Seminary, Hartford, Conn., and single lectures in the series have been used elsewhere.

In preparing them for the press I have widened the original scope by adding the lectures which deal with the origin, progress, and future of the modern Sunday-school. The literary form in which they were originally cast when prepared for delivery as lectures has been changed somewhat, the better to appeal to the constituency of readers now addressed; but I have not materially altered the aim to which I was committed by the Ridley foundation, namely, to deal mainly with the minister in his relation to the young people of his congregation. The importance of this aspect of Sunday-school work, and the slight attention which it has so far received, seem to me to justify this distinct and definite purpose in the book, even though

it now addresses itself to a wider and more varied audience than that for which it was originally intended.

I wish to express my grateful appreciation of the help which I have received in the preparation of this volume from Dr. H. Clay Trumbull, of Philadelphia, and his son, Mr. C. G. Trumbull; Dr. C. R. Blackall, editor of periodicals of the American Baptist Publication Society; and Rev. Carey Bonner, general secretary of the Sunday-school Union of London.

The literature of the Sunday-school has now become very large, and the marginal references in this volume will show how much I have been indebted to many writers. Let me make special mention of the works on Robert Raikes, by J. Henry Harris; W. H. Watson's "History and Work of the Sunday-school Union"; and Dr. H. Clay Trumbull's admirable Yale lectures on the Sunday-school; the report of the World's Sunday-school Convention, held in London, in 1889, with much statistical literature of the same kind and of later date; and also of Dr. S. L. Gulick's excellent summaries in "The Growth of the Kingdom of God." Many valuable suggestions of a practical nature will be found in Dr. Edward Judson's little book on "The Institutional Church," and in the "Handbook on Sunday-school Work," by Rev. L. E. Peters.

January 1, 1902. T. H. P.

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I

THE BIBLE AND THE CHILD

THE authority of the Bible the first consideration. The Old Testament: Patriarchal times; the child in the larger family of Israel. The New Testament: Jesus now the prominent figure. Subsequent Ages: Growth of priestly assumption; the Reformation. The early days of the Sunday-school. Inadequate conception of the child's nature. Misconception as to pastoral obligations. The growth of more healthful views.

I

THE BIBLE AND THE CHILD

To the young chaplain who inquired of the Duke of Wellington whether, in the face of the prejudice, superstition, and ignorance of the Hindus, it did not seem to him a hopeless and extravagant enterprise to preach the Christian religion to the people of India, the answer came back without a moment's hesitation: "Look, sir, to your marching orders—'Preach the gospel to every creature.'"

This suggests the course for us to pursue in considering the duty of the Christian minister in relation to the young people of his congregation. His work among them, whether in the pulpit, the school, or the home; whether as preacher, teacher, or friend, must be settled by the instructions and examples which he finds in the Bible. The author of this book is the Father of the child. In no other volume in all literature is there a gallery of children with faces so varied or so interesting. Every type of child may be found there, and the tenderest as well as the ripest life is set in high and inspiring light, and looked at with reference

not to time alone but also to still wider and more lasting relations. So that when we study what by precept and example the Bible teaches us as to the children, we may expect to find our way direct to the will of God in relation to the church in its treatment of them, and to that will, also, in relation to the minister of his holy religion, who by his life and teaching is the servant of the church and the messenger of the gospel to the youngest lamb of the fold.

Unquestionably much attention is given in the Bible to the lives of children. The charm which the book has for those who have not as yet caught its deeper notes is due in large measure to this. In contrast with other sacred books of the ages it is full of child life. In its earlier chapters, onward from the voice that calls Cain to account for the death of his brother, we are taught the lesson, afterward to be emphasized by Jesus himself, that the life of the young is dear to God. The destinies of the world seem to travel down to Egypt with the lad Joseph, and to rock with the infant Moses in his ark of bulrushes on the Nile. The helm of history is for the time in the grasp of the child. And this in its turn suggests that in the sight of God the child is not only dear to his heart, but also precious beyond our human computation. It is from him that we learn that it is

Awful to behold
A helpless infant newly born,
Whose little hands unconscious hold
The keys of darkness and of dawn.

The old schoolmaster who always lifted his cap to his scholars, as to the future masters of the world, was right. Jacob climbing through dubious paths to the height of Peniel; Joseph learning that it was not his brethren, but God, who sent him down to Egypt; Moses attaining to a diviner parentage by refusing to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; Samuel waking in the temple to a loftier consecration than any Eli could bestow as he cries, "Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth"; David taken from the sheepfold to feed and guide the chosen people; Josiah crowned a child, but not too young to become a reformer as well as a ruler—these are lives which in their earlier developments are prophetic of the mighty power to be wielded through all time by him of whom Isaiah cried centuries before his birth, "Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given, and the government shall be upon his shoulders."[1] So true is it that alike in the home, the nation, and the whole wide world it is the little child that leads. For we have not learned the teaching of the Bible aright until from other lips than those of Jesus we hear the words which gained a newer

[1] Isa. 9 : 6.

and deeper meaning as he spoke them: "Except ye be converted and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven." [1]

In considering what the Bible teaches as to the minister in his relation to children, we will turn, in the first place, to the Old Testament.

When we do so, what impresses us at once, I think, is that the whole history of the human race strikes its roots in the family. Of Abraham, the Lord says: "For I know him that he will command his children and his household after him." [2] Here, in germ, is the principle of family training, out of which I believe all other training must grow. Back of the priest we see the patriarch; back of the church, the family. Abraham was the head of the household, and, therefore, its minister. You remember how nobly Burns pictures this high office in the "Cotter's Saturday Night," when, bending over the big ha' Bible:

> The priestlike father reads the sacred page,
> How Abram was the friend of God on high;
> Or Moses bade eternal warfare wage
> With Amalek's ungracious progeny!
> Or how the royal bard did groaning lie
> Beneath the stroke of heaven's avenging ire;
> Or Job's pathetic plaint and wailing cry;
> Or rapt Isaiah's wild seraphic fire;
> Or other holy seers that tune the sacred lyre.

[1] Matt. 18: 3. [2] Gen. 18: 19.

And the patriarchal portrait receives its crowning touch when,

> Kneeling down to heaven's eternal king,
> The saint, the father, and the husband prays.

The development of the theocracy can be followed step by step from the call of Abram—"I am the Almighty God, walk before me and be thou perfect"[1]—to the prophecy (among the last words of the Old Testament) of the day in which "there shall be upon the bells of the horses holiness unto the Lord,"[2] and through it all no national or ecclesiastical changes are suffered to affect this fact of the supreme importance of the family as the foundation of human society. The insistence on the duties which the parent owes to the child and the child to the parent hinges on the truth, never lost sight of for one instant, that God is the Father of both the one and the other. In other words, it is the religious aspect of the household that is of paramount importance.

To this may be traced the obligation under which the parent is laid to train his children. To him, and not to priest or instructor, is it said of the commandments, the statutes, and the judgments by which the people were to be guided: "Thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy chil-

[1] Gen. 17 : 1. [2] Zech. 14 : 20.

dren, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up."[1] The preservation of the national records seemed to hinge upon the maintenance of this unwritten history. So Joshua says to the Israelites, when at last Jordan has been crossed and Canaan reached: "When your children shall ask their fathers in time to come, saying, What mean these stones? Then ye shall let your children know, saying, Israel came over this Jordan on dry land. For the Lord your God dried up the waters of Jordan from before you, until ye were passed over," and the spirit of the theocracy breathes in the final words of the passage, "That all the people of the earth might know the hand of the Lord that it is mighty: that ye might fear the Lord your God for ever."[2] Thus is fulfilled the psalmist's aspiration in ages long subsequent to this, "Instead of thy fathers shall be thy children, whom thou mayest make princes in all the earth."[3] Although as the years passed on the disposition to do this work of parental instruction by proxy and deputy would inevitably grow, yet such passages as these, and many others like them, would be ready to his hand when the national reformer recalled the Hebrew to his duties and sounded the keynote of revival

[1] Deut. 6 : 7. [2] Josh. 4 : 21. [3] Ps. 45 : 16.

in the heart of the family:[1] "Set your hearts unto all the words which I testify among you this day, which ye shall command your children to observe to do, all the words of this law." And for us the insistence upon parental obligation at a time when church and school are such convenient and capable substitutes for it, and when in the vaunt of numbers we are tempted to lose sight of the value of each one, is surely of equal importance. There was profound wisdom as well as shrewd wit in the repartee of Julia Ward Howe when Charles Sumner refused to give her help for a runaway Negro, saying in his lofty way: "I no longer care for the individual; I am only interested in the race," and she replied: "I am glad that God Almighty has not got quite so far as that yet." We may be well assured that he never will, and that we, for our part, never ought to.

To this hour the Jew is the most powerful illustration of heredity. Find him where you may, he cannot be hid. But this law in its very highest aspect is expressed in the parting resolve of Joshua: "As for me, and my house, we will serve the Lord." We have no right to insist upon the malign and fatal working of this law of heredity in some instances, while laying no stress upon its golden fruitage in others. He who by the opera-

[1] Deut. 32 : 46.

tion of a natural law visits the iniquities of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth generation, also makes promise of unspeakable blessing to us and to our children if we be obedient. "The Scriptures," says Horace Bushnell, "have a perpetual habit, if I may so speak, of associating children with the character and destiny of their parents. They do not always regard the individual as an isolated unit, but they often look upon men as they exist in families and races and under organic laws." [1]

For here, as elsewhere, example speaks louder than precept. The father is a teacher in every case. His very silence, his prayerlessness, his irreligion, his indifference to the highest claims of the soul, come to form a part of the child's training. And equally he who wears the white flower of a blameless life in the presence of his family is a preacher of righteousness, although his lips are inapt to set forth the truth which is incarnate in his daily conduct. Both alike illustrate Jean Paul's saying that the mother puts the commas and semicolons into the child's life, but the father the colons and the periods. We remember how the twisted strands run, now white and now black, through the royal annals of Judah and Israel: "Azariah did that which was right in the sight of

[1] "Christian Nurture," p. 39.

the Lord, according to all that his father Amaziah had done," or "Jehoiachin did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord, according to all that his father had done."[1] We weary of the swing of the pendulum with its monotonous burden until we reflect that it is the pendulum which always and everywhere tells off the history of human lives.

One more word must be added before we leave this point of the duty of the parent under the theocracy to train his children in religion. The teaching which was prescribed was not so much in the history of the nation as it was in the laws of God. In our admiration of the heroic deeds by which a patriotic ancestry won for us our liberties are we not tempted to overlook the principles, powerful and sometimes perhaps stern, by which their devotion was inspired? To "teach and to do" were duties which went hand in hand in the Mosaic legislation,[2] and both were to be practised, so that "thou and thy son and thy son's son, all the days of thy life," may flourish and increase in the land that floweth with milk and honey. We shall see, by and by, in what this instruction consisted, but I say this much at once because it seems to me of great moment that we should recognize that all religious teaching in home and

[1] 2 Kings 15 : 3 ; 2 Kings 24 : 9. [2] Deut. 6.

church and school must be scriptural. The Bible is not only a book of examples, it is also a book of precepts. There is law in its life as well as life in its law. The unfeigned faith in Timothy,[1] his inheritance from his grandmother Lois and his mother Eunice, came, we may well believe, from the fact that from a child he had known the Holy Scriptures, which were able to make him wise unto salvation.

We have been speaking hitherto of the child in the household where the father was in some very important sense priest as well as patriarch. This must have continued even after the Jewish hierarchy grew in stateliness and splendor. The claims of that hierarchy could never supersede the rights and duties of the parent toward his sons and daughters. To them he stood as the perpetual reminder of the relation in which Jehovah stood toward each of his children, for, as we know, that relation was paternal, never priestly. And so by solemn rites the child was early brought into another family, wider, more wonderful than the little circle at home—I mean the family of Israel. The lesser led to the larger, but to each the center was the same. There, in the faith of the devout Hebrew, rose the august and inspiring Presence to whom appeal might be made by every

[1] 2 Tim. 3 : 15.

son of Israel: "Have we not all one father? hath not one God created us?" [1]

Into this family the Jewish child was brought by a primitive rite which was not peculiar to the Hebrews. As consciousness asserted itself and the world about him appealed to his heart and mind he came to understand to how much this rite admitted him and how widespread and how strong was the influence of his national religion. That religion consisted of two things: "Knowledge of God, which by a series of inferences, one from the other, ultimately resolved itself into theology; and service, which again consisted of the proper observance of all that was prescribed by God and of works of charity toward men." [2]

That multitudes initiated into the family and trained in its ceremonial observances and in its moral code failed to take up their sonship was of course true. The personal life, then as now, too often proved that all "are not Israel that are of Israel." But my point is not affected by this fact. What I aim to make clear is the perpetual presence of religion, ritual or moral, during the whole life of the Hebrew, and especially for our present purpose, during his early years.

It was never out of sight or hearing with him.

---

[1] Mal. 2 : 10.

[2] Edersheim, "Sketches of Jewish Social Life in the Days of Christ," p. 125.

Occasionally he would be taken up to Jerusalem to the great festival, borne thither on a tide of expectant or triumphant song and listening to the pulsations of the splendid and imposing national faith at its fountain head. But independent of these special occasions his memory would, from the first, be richly stored with sacred associations. When his own candle was added to the family illumination at the feast of the Dedication; when he took his part in the good cheer of Purim; when the home was abandoned for the booth at the feast of Tabernacles, and when with scrupulous care the Passover meal was made ready, he would, perhaps all unconsciously to himself, associate the most gladsome and the most serious moments of his young life with religion.[1]

Still more to our purpose is it to follow him in his hours of schooling in the precepts of the law. By and by parental instruction was supplemented by the teaching of the synagogue school. Here it was that, as Philo says, the Jews learned from their earliest youth to "bear the image of the law in their souls."[2] The vicissitudes of war, civil strife, changes of fortune or of place, banishment itself, any or all of these might separate the Jew from the land of his birth and from the city of his solemnities, but the synagogue school was a per-

[1] Edersheim, "Sketches," etc., p. 108.

[2] Trumbull, "Yale Lectures on the Sunday-school," pp. 7, 8.

manent institution. Like the pillar in the wilderness, it went with him always, alike in the daylight and in the darkness of his fortunes. Instruction in the law came in time to rise above public worship among the features of the synagogue. The exile multiplied these Bible-schools amazingly.[1] At least eleven different expressions were coined to describe them. Attendance upon them ultimately became obligatory. At five years of age the Hebrew Bible was to be begun, and that, let us notice, not with Genesis, but with Leviticus; not with history, but with law.[2] From the age of six onward through his whole life the Hebrew remained in school. "Entering thus early," says Doctor Trumbull, "the Jewish scholar never came to an age for graduation from that school. He was to continue in it during his earthly life-course and at death he was supposed to pass on into the heavenly Bible-school beyond."[3]

We see, then, that the Sunday-school of to-day is in the direct line of succession from the Bible-school of the Jewish synagogue, and so we can understand the satisfaction with which, a century or more ago, Robert Raikes, the founder of our modern schools, wrote after attending the first anniversary of the Sunday-school in an English parish church: "The happy choice of a text had a

[1] Trumbull, "Yale Lectures on the Sunday-school," pp. 8, 11.
[2] Edersheim, "Sketches," p. 130. [3] "Yale Lectures," p. 192.

remarkable effect in commanding the attention of the audience. The Scriptures could not have furnished a passage more literally applicable to the subject. It was taken from Deut. 31 : 12, 13 : 'Gather the people together, men, and women, and children, and thy stranger that is within thy gates, that they may hear, and that they may learn, and fear the Lord your God, and observe to do all the words of this law : and that their children, which have not known any thing, may hear, and learn to fear the Lord your God.'"[1]

When from the Old Testament we pass to the New, we find no material change in the view of infancy, childhood, and youth, as God sees them and as he wills that his ministers shall regard them.

Now, the prominent figure in our pictures is Jesus, the ideal young Hebrew. Glance at his own life. A poor woman standing in a London gallery before a picture of the Virgin and Child, was heard to say, "Who wouldn't be a good mother with such a son as that?" But that his Father's business is calling to him so imperiously, we could wish that we knew more of that fair childhood and that opening youth. What we do know is wonderfully fascinating. In the temple at eight days old he was initiated into the family

[1] Gregory's "Life of Robert Raikes," p. 178.

of Israel. Over the babe, cradled in his arms, devout Simeon broke forth into the prayer which in its last words

> Did attain
> To something of prophetic strain.

In Nazareth, growing in wisdom as he grew in age, Jesus was subject to his parents; and in all probability in the synagogue school of the little city "he learned his earliest earthly lesson from the book of Leviticus." [1]

So he made ready for the visit to Jerusalem which was taken "after the custom of the feast"; [2] and in the higher school, as we may dare to call it, in the temple, the boy of twelve found his place among the doctors of the law, "hearing them and asking them questions, so that all that heard him were astonished at his understanding and answers."

Consider the course which Jesus pursued with children and young people. Naturally they had a great charm for him. Still in his eyes heaven lay around them. To have a little child in his arms was to come nearer to heaven than he could come in any other way. Follower and crowd had to stand back when the child appealed to his love. There was a depth in the child's wondering glance, and a response in the child's simple embrace which

[1] Trumbull, p. 29. [2] Luke 2 : 42.

he sought for in vain elsewhere. The kingdom of heaven was within appreciable reach of the arms that held the infant, and the child set in the midst of envious and ambitious disciples—a jewel in a swine's snout—preached a silent sermon on the humility without which no man can ever be truly great. The man whom we think of as the youngest and most childlike among the apostles was the disciple whom Jesus loved, and the only other time when that expression is used is when the young ruler kneels at his feet to ask what he shall do to inherit eternal life. The young girl at his bidding arose from the dead; and it was a young man, the only son of his mother and she a widow, on whom he worked the miracle of resurrection at the gate of Nain.

This natural attraction toward the life which was still in its springtide comes to have a deeper meaning when we listen to the words which fell from our Lord's lips as to children. Of such, he said again and again, was the kingdom of heaven. To despise one of these little ones was the gravest offense, "for I say unto you, that in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven." [1] Among the last injunctions to Peter was that to "Feed my lambs," which, interpret it as we may, can scarcely have been spoken

[1] Matt. 18 : 10.

without some profound reference to the young life to be hereafter folded in the church which our Lord came to found.[1]

It is to Jesus, then, that we look as the model teacher, for while John the Baptist came preaching in the wilderness, it was Jesus who rather taught,[2] beside the lake or in the court of the temple. It is in Jesus that we see the model pastor, by his last words to Peter and the other disciples giving its perpetual place in the Christian ministry to the prophecy of Isaiah, "He shall feed his flock like a shepherd, he shall gather the lambs with his arms, and carry them in his bosom."[3]

It is to Jesus also that we turn for the model of what each minister should aim to be in his relation to the young people of his congregation. More than the teacher, more than the pastor, he should aspire to be their friend. For the infant in arms, for the little child beginning to run, for the young man on the threshold of life, Jesus had an irresistible attractiveness. He had, as no other before or since, the one touch of nature which makes the whole world kin. And this youth saw and to this youth responded, while lives more mature in the ways of the world held aloof.

On the mount of ascension Jesus was parted from his disciples and a cloud received him out of

[1] Craft, "The Bible and the Sunday-school," p. 107.
[2] Trumbull, p. 33. [3] Isa. 40 : 11.

their sight. But still the traditional insistence upon the value of the child, which lay at the very foundation of the Jewish theocracy, and received a fresh emphasis from the lips of our Lord, remained. "For the promise," said Peter in his address on the day of Pentecost, "is to you, and to your children."[1] Children at a very early age were baptized and added to the Lord. There is nothing which makes Paul so much one of ourselves as his tender affection for Titus, "my own son," or for "Son Timothy,"[2] the heir of his inspiring charges; or for Onesimus the runaway slave, "whom I have begotten in my bonds." In Timothy himself we find the earliest example of boyhood in a Christian family. "To his recollection, there probably never was a time when he did not sympathize with the piety so venerable in Lois, so lovely in Eunice. He had been trained for Christ, and grew up a lamb in the Shepherd's fold."[3]

Paul's Epistles are the witnesses that because a boy or girl came into that fold filial duties were by no means relaxed. Rather were they strengthened by new and more sacred bonds. "Children,"[4] the injunction now ran, "obey your parents in the Lord; for this is right." Here was a new motive

[1] Acts 2 : 39. [2] 1 Tim. 1 : 18.
[3] S. G. Green, "Christian Ministry to the Young," p. 18.
[4] Eph. 6 : 1.

for a natural duty. You catch its force still better in another form of the same injunction: "Children, obey your parents in all things; for this is well pleasing unto the Lord." [1] The ancient Jewish conception seems to be lifted into a serener light as we listen to John when he begins his second Epistle: "The elder unto the elect lady, and her children, whom I love in the truth." [2]

As to distinct teaching, such as was the strength of the synagogue school, it is abundantly evident that to it under the new order which was gradually growing up, all the old honor was paid.[3] Paul, who had himself been a scholar in the school of Gamaliel, made the synagogue wherever he went in his journeys as a Christian missionary the scene of careful, patient, exhaustive teaching, while at Athens,[4] in the market-place, every day, he discussed the truths of the kingdom with them that met with him. There seems, therefore, to be some reason in the claim that the ancient Jewish schools, which had gained in number and in influence after the exile, became now "the fresh starting points of the Christian church [5] in all the earlier apostolic work under the requirements and the authority of the Great Commission." The Bible-school was literally the nursery of the church. "The Apostolic Church," as Baron Bunsen says,

[1] Col. 3 : 20. [2] 2 John 1. [3] Trumbull, p. 48.
[4] Acts 17 : 17. [5] Trumbull, p. 48.

"made the school the connecting link between herself and the world." [1] And the Acts of the Apostles, which is indeed but the first chapter in the acts of the Holy Spirit to which no limit of time can be put, closes appropriately with the figure of Paul in his own hired house in Rome,[2] where he received all that came in unto him, preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ with all confidence, no man forbidding him." A teacher to the last, and so a model for many of us to whom may be denied his eloquent tongue, his burning zeal, and the varied and adventurous chapters in the history of his ministry.

My reason for pursuing this line of thought will be made plain if we pass from this clear, exhilarating air into the ages which followed. To do so is, little by little, to change our atmosphere for the worse. How this happened it is not to our purpose to describe. The Hebrew conception of the home, with its careful training in the law, dies out. The apostolic practice of free discussion is transformed into the medieval pronouncement of dogmatic conclusions. The simple rites of the primitive church stiffen into awful and mysterious sacraments. There is little or no home nurture encouraged. The child is handed over to the

[1] Trumbull, p. 39.

[2] Acts 28 : 30, 31.

priest for instruction. The formal catechism, with its perplexing definitions, becomes the authoritative substitute for the more natural conversation of an earlier day. Jesus no longer sits in the midst of the doctors, hearing them and asking them questions. The child spirit is not now welcome there, and the heart of the child beats there, warm and responsive, no more. An era comes of hard dogmatic theology. In science the Middle Ages made the sun go round the earth, substituting center for circumference; and in their religious dialectics, by a like confusion between greater and less, the world of human life revolves about a hard and fast system of thought. In the sphere of our own subject the child is made for theology, not theology for the child. Among other ominous features which mark this changed aspect of the Christian faith we note the growth of fear as an instrument of spiritual influence. Threats take the place of promises, and once more the disciples repel the child from the arms of the Master.

It might be a suggestive inquiry, were this the place to pursue it, how far the debased medieval teaching as to children in their relation to the church cast a shadow over the Protestant Reformation, which was a revolt against it, and to what extent that shadow lingered in the later Puritan teaching, which influences us yet. Because this influence has been so virile in its effect on the life

of the church and the commonwealth we must pause for a few moments to glance at one or two of its characteristics.

Let us try to picture to ourselves what religion meant to the Puritan boy or girl in the old England of the Ironsides or in the New England of the Massachusetts settlers.

"When your children shall ask their fathers"[1] suggests the Jewish method of teaching. It is significant that the question comes from the child, the answer from the parent. An exchange of this kind has often dismayed the elders as much as if the boy had gained possession of the rod or the horse of the spur. But in the early Christian time the religious teaching, following the Jewish model, "was mainly by the approved means of question and answer."[2] The word "homily" suggests that in the services of the meeting-house the sermon was so free in its cast that questions were encouraged. "Even when the ministry was transferred to a designated class of persons this right of joining in conversation with the preacher (as he discoursed) was not wholly surrendered by the congregation."[3] To the neglect and abandonment of this wholesome practice we owe it that the tone of the preacher became gradually authoritative and dogmatic, "As who should say, 'I am Sir Oracle,

[1] Josh. 1 : 51. [2] Trumbull, p. 52. [3] *Ibid.*, p. 54.

and when I ope my lips let no dog bark.'" The Bible-school of Paul and his fellow-apostles (had it been preserved) would have held the spirit of ecclesiastical assumption in check. The layman would have had his chance. Even the child might have put his question. The evidence is only too abundant that the reverse condition of things prevailed. The layman who raised his voice was apt to pay for his contumacy with his life. And even under the Puritan rule the child was bidden to be seen but not heard. The prevailing impression as to children, in the England on either side of the Atlantic, seems to have been that they must be held in, if not with bit and bridle, then with rod and rule. Dr. E. N. Kirk, in our own country, recalled the days of his childhood as days "when indoctrination and restraint were the highest aim of parents, preachers, and teachers."

The Puritan was so much accustomed to be persecuted that we need not wonder at his importing into the theological teaching which he gave to his children some of the sterner and harsher elements of medieval theology. I cannot think that religion to the Puritan boy was so joyous or so wholesome a thing as it was to the young Hebrew. The "New England Primer" was scarcely an evolution from the conversations in Paul's hired house in Rome, and the "Bay Psalm Book" can hardly be put in tune with the jubilant or-

chestra of the sons of Asaph. To refer to the "New England Primer" is to speak of the American classic of the eighteenth century, about which it is no exaggeration to say that "there never has been printed in this country a book laying no claim to inspiration whose influence has been so extended and enduring as that of the 'New England Primer.'" In many respects, I had almost said in most, it seems to be a compendium of religious faith and practice well worthy of the place which it held unchallenged for a hundred years in the life of the colonists. All the more interesting, therefore, is it to turn to its pages for light upon our present subject. There is much said and taught as to young people. These four lines we are bidden learn by heart:

> Have communion with few,
> Be intimate with One,
> Deal justly with all,
> Speak evil of none.

Are they not almost cynical in their shrewdness? Certainly they are not likely to promote sociability. The "Advice to Youth," in another part of the book, is not founded on the Gospels, but is a paraphrase from the closing words of Ecclesiastes, and what we notice is that the burden of its message recalls rather the despair of Anacreon than the exhilaration of the last chapter of the Philippians:

Behold, the months come hasting on
When you shall say, my joys are gone.

The view of sin is remarkable chiefly by defect. Much stress is laid upon its origin in the heart, due to "Adam's sin imputed to me, and a corrupt nature dwelling in me," so that this nature is "empty of grace, bent unto sin, only unto sin and that continually." But little is made of its moral heinousness, of the present punishment it brings with it, of the shame and degradation into which it drags our manhood and womanhood. Even in the lines which seem to incline toward a brighter view of the possibilities of life, a sudden twist at the last brings in the inevitable lash:

What's right and good now show me, Lord,
And teach me by thy grace and word.
Thus shall I be a child of God,
And love and fear thy hand and rod.

This element of fear is rarely absent, but in almost every instance it is dread of future retribution rather than of present punishment. At any moment that future may become the present, for

Cruel death is always near,
So frail a thing is man.

Even in the famous alphabet from which generations of New England children learned their letters, Y gives us a cut of a boy with a wine cup

rather larger than his head before him, while the skeleton at the feast rises on the other side of the table, and the cheerful legend runs :

> While youth do cheer,
> Death may be near,

and the exigencies of the letter which comes before this,—X,—are met by bidding the child to say—and how he must have wondered who "Xerxes" was :—

> Xerxes did die, and so must I.

Probably in all Protestant literature there is nothing more sombre or tragic than the "Dialogue between Christ, Youth, and the Devil," with which this primer concludes. It is at some grotesquely terrible twelfth century carving over a cathedral portal that we seem to be gazing as we read what Death, the last speaker, says :

> Youth, I am come to fetch thy breath,
> And carry thee to the shades of death.
> No pity on thee can I show,
> Thou hast thy God offended so.
> Thy soul and body I'll divide,
> Thy body in the grave I'll hide,
> And thy dear soul in hell must lie
> With devils to eternity.

It almost appears as though the treatment of children were somehow turned about since the days

when Jesus drew the babes to his arms and blessed them. The answers in the "Shorter Catechism" are as a rule admirable, and the definition of the chief end of man has probably never been excelled. But to commit these answers to memory, as an exercise in sheer mnemonics, must have led to a wrong conception of religion. The intellect rather than the heart was appealed to. And so the mischief made itself apparent when a system or a scheme of theology took the place of religion, and the decisions of councils or assemblies, embodied in carefully weighed phrases, rose between the child and the simplicity that is in Christ. It seems strange when we remember the picture of Philip Doddridge, the little boy, learning the Scripture history from the Dutch tiles in the fireplace, as he sat on his mother's knee, to hear Philip Doddridge the divine saying: "Without a miracle it cannot be expected that much of the Christian scheme could be understood by these little creatures in the first dawning of reason, though a few evangelical phrases may be taught (to them), and sometimes, by a happy kind of accident, may be rightly applied."[1] In that saving clause of concession, "a happy kind of accident," lay the whole catechetical method, and among the triumphs of the evangelical revival, for which no

[1] Trumbull, p. 125.

man sighed more sincerely or prayed more earnestly than did Philip Doddridge, the establishment and spread of the Sunday-school is assuredly one of the most glorious.

Striking its roots in the Middle Ages rather than in the first days of Christianity, the Puritan conception of the child was so much in evidence when the Sunday-school system was founded that it is well for us to recognize its powerful influence. It is impossible to acquit that conception of grave injustice to the child himself, and consequently of grave misapprehension of the minister's duty toward him.

Was it not a mistake to make religion so largely a matter of the understanding, to the neglect of the feelings? To do this (and it has always been the weakness of Protestantism) was untrue to the child's nature. In it there are wide and fruitful margins of imagination bordering the hard, beaten track of fact. Nothing in the child's life is felt apart from its atmosphere, or looked at apart from its sunlight. A child sees each thing in the concrete, or else sees it not at all.[1] Perhaps in consequence of this natural delight in fancy, the child finds very

[1] "When I say my prayers," a little child said lately, "I always see everything. When I say, 'deliver us from evil,' I see God going out with a spear to fight Satan; and when I say, 'forgive us our trespasses,' I see him with a big rubber cleaning a blackboard."

few difficulties in the narratives of the Bible. Often he lives in a world of imagination; and there the axe can swim, and the cruse of salt can heal the bitter waters of the fountain; under stress of circumstances there is nothing wonderful in the ass speaking, and it was to be expected that the whale, being prepared for the purpose, would swallow Jonah. There is no skepticism in a healthy childhood, and so the highest science when once it recognizes that there are more things in heaven and earth than are dreamed of in our philosophy, sees a new application in those great words: "Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as a little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven." [1]

Consider also the misconception which the minister is likely to form, under the teaching which we have in view, of his duties and privileges as the pastor of the lambs of the flock.

The extreme emphasis which the Puritan clergyman placed on a corrupt nature in the child would be likely to befog him as he looked at children themselves. He would endeavor to make them square with his theology, and although it might be a task as difficult and painful of accomplishment as the Chinese foot-binding, yet it must be done. So the child would not be understood; and here

[1] Matt. 18 : 4.

as elsewhere ignorance as to your material is likely to prove fatal to sound building. Then, in due course the time came when the pendulum swung to the opposite extreme, and Channing's appeal found many responsive hearers:

> You must have faith in the child whom you instruct. Believe in the greatness of its nature, and in its capacity of improvement. . . Have faith in his nature, especially as fitted for religion. Do not, as some do, look on the child as born under the curse of God, as naturally hostile to all goodness and truth. . . Was it an infant demon which Jesus took in his arms and said, "Of such is the kingdom of heaven"? Is the child who, as you relate to him a story of suffering or generosity, listens with a tearful or kindling eye and a thrilling heart, is he a child of hell? My friends, have faith in the child; not that it is virtuous and holy at birth; for virtue or holiness is not, cannot be, born with us, . . but have faith in the child as capable of knowing and loving the good and the true, as having a conscience to take the side of duty, as open to ingenuous motives for well-doing, as created for knowledge, wisdom, piety, and disinterested love.[1]

Another evil which may be traced to an erroneous view of the resources and capacities of the young, was a disbelief in their early conversion. "A New England clergyman's wife," says Dr. Trumbull, "told me, years ago, that when, as a child, she and one or two of her playmates were interested in the subject of personal religion, they

[1] "Works," p. 359.

dared not be detected by their parents in social prayer, lest their action should be deemed irreverent, and they were necessitated to seek Christ clandestinely." [1] When the great awakening swept over Northampton, in 1734, Jonathan Edwards was "amazed at the large numbers of children who professed what he regarded as a genuine experience." [2] The truth was that the conception of what conversion meant had become inadequate to the thing itself. There were no doubt good men and true in the churches who were as much scandalized at the early devotion of the young as were the chief priests and scribes with the children of Jerusalem crying their hosannas before the Saviour as he entered the temple, and they as much as the chief priests and scribes needed to lay to heart the psalmist's words: "Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise." [3]

Perhaps it is owing to these unrevised theological conceptions, which had come centuries before from the churches that made no place for conversion in their ecclesiastical arrangements, that the Sabbath-school, when first it was proposed in America, found little favor with many good people and some opposition from others. Professor Austin Phelps, in looking back to the days of his child-

[1] Trumbull, p. 174. [2] Allen's "Edwards," p. 158.
[3] Matt. 21 : 16.

hood, remarks that biblical exposition was not common, except in the exercises of public worship, and then he goes on to say:

> Nearly all the exposition of the Scriptures which the people received was from their pastors and was given by them from their pulpits. The formal, religious instruction of children at home was confined mainly to two things, the Westminster Catechism and the text of Scriptures, both of which were committed to memory. Aged persons are still living who give evidence of this fact in their own religious culture.
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> The second Sabbath-school in Massachusetts was established by my father, at the suggestion of a Christian lady, in his parish at West Brookfield. It was done in opposition to the judgment of some of his most devout parishioners. They refused to countenance the innovation by the presence of their children. And he has told me that they and others who favored it had reflected so little on the subject that they scarcely knew what to do with the children who did attend.[1]

It cannot be due to mere accident that the more healthful feeling and policy of the ministry and the church, as regards the young people of the congregation, dates from the beginning of the Sunday-school era. The old New England idea seems to have been that the Lord's Day was not to be secularized by any kind of instruction. Not even of the Bible was there to be any teaching. The day was sacred to worship, and, while that

[1] "Theory of Preaching," p. 206.

worship included its full share of preaching, nothing which savored of a school class was to intrude upon it. For Bible instruction the week-day schools were designed. The better class of ministers no doubt catechised in these schools, and, later, in the churches, in an intelligent manner. But for the rest it was easier to preach than it was to catechise, and it was easier, when catechising needed to be done, to keep to the words of the book. So it came about that in process of time the catechism was dropped in the day-school in favor of secular subjects and in the church service in favor of the sermon. "An untaught generation—untaught in any form of the divinely appointed Bible-school—was a sure result, and the religious decline of New England was inevitable." [1]

Not yet, it would seem, had our forefathers discovered that often the Sunday-school is the starting place for the church. This is one lesson which our home missionary societies have taught us. The church to-day owes fully as much to the school as the school owes to the church. How emphatically true this is we may have further opportunities to point out. At present there are two results of this new feeling in relation to children.

First, I think the pastor came to believe, as his

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[1] Trumbull, pp. 88, 89.

predecessors had not, in bringing children into the church. He must fold as well as feed the lambs of the flock.

How reasonable this sounds to us. To quote Dr. Edward Judson:[1] "It is sometimes said that even a child can be converted; it should be said that even a grown person can be. The nearer the cradle, as a rule, the nearer Christ. The most intelligent Christians are readiest to accept children." And so the same writer happily compares the conversion of the child to crossing a stream near its source. To do so is easy. "Only a step will take you across, and you may even pass from bank to bank without knowing it." But every after mile of the river's course, broadening the water, increases the difficulty of crossing. Perhaps it was to meet this familiar experience that the church, neglecting child conversion and Christian culture, was driven to violent and artificial revival methods. The still small voice had no longer a hearing amid the hundred vociferating tones of business and pleasure, and so the cornet, the big drum, the American organ, by and by the whole orchestra, had to be turned on. More than half of the evils inevitable to the clamorous revival—noisy, irreverent, shallow—must be placed to the account of the church, which by its neglect of the

[1] "The Institutional Church," p. 109.

reasonable methods pursued under the Hebrew theocracy, and so on to the days of the apostles, was driven to resort to methods which were often as unreasonable as they were unscriptural. We must of course recognize in passing that the better men among the evangelistic preachers are now in full and happy accord with the more excellent way which we are commending. But it is difficult to account for the leakage in American church-membership—often largest in the districts which have been roused and swept by a revival—on any other explanation than that the so-called conversion of the young people has been preceded by no nurture and followed by no training. It has been little more than a passing breeze, seized at the moment to fill the sails, and when that has died away, the convert, numbered among the trophies of the awakening, has lain

> As idle as a painted ship
> Upon a painted ocean.

The humanity of early church-fellowship must be apparent. The nominal conversion of one already versed in sin and sadly wise in the ways of the world is often little more than the life preserver which hangs from the ceiling of the stateroom in an ocean steamer. Neglected at ordinary times, it may be hastily assumed in a time of danger or alarm, perhaps to save, but perhaps and

quite as probably only to entangle the wearer and so hasten him to his end. The simple and natural conversion of the young is like learning to swim, once learned not always practised, but never to be forgotten. It should be the aim of the Christian minister to bring the lamb into the fold before the bitter winds are abroad. A wrong is done to God, to his wisdom, and to his love, by any course which allows men and women to believe that salvation is something which comes in only when sin has run riot in the soul; that the far country, with its bitter bondage and its hard hunger, is a necessary step toward the father's house and welcome. There is no need that we continue in sin that grace may abound. No; "Thou shalt call his name Jesus: for he shall save his people from their sins."[1] Religion is indeed an antidote when the poison has been taken, but it is far more and far better. It is a preventive first, and a cure only when as a preventive it has not been used. "I am," says Jesus, "the bread of life." The journey into the far country, the riotous living, the citizen's field, and the degrading companionship of the swine, must have sown tares in the memory of the prodigal which would, in a happier future, shame and torment him, and from which he might have been free had he never cried, "Father, give

[1] Matt. 1 : 21.

me the portion of goods that falleth to me." No return to the God of our youth, after we have wandered far from him, can take the sting from the natural law in the spiritual world: "He that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption."

A pastor of long experience says:[1]

> We are verily guilty if we do not thoroughly believe in, labor, and pray for, early conversions. Is it not written: "Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth"? that Eli "perceived that the Lord had called Samuel, the child"? that Josiah began, when eight years old, to seek after his father's God? Robert Hall became a Christian at twelve, Matthew Henry at seven. Mr. Spurgeon states that in one year he had baptized forty children and that they had held out better than an average equal number of adults.

This leads me to notice the second feature in our present conviction as to the relation of the minister to the children in his congregation. I mean the increasing importance which he attaches to Christian nurture.

When Horace Bushnell used that phrase a generation ago it fell upon the ear of the church almost as the accent of an unknown tongue. The suspicion of a strange new doctrine which attached to some of the conclusions of his fresh and vigorous volume attached, in a certain degree, even to

[1] Baldwin, "A Forty one Years' Pastorate," pp. 53, 54.

its fortunate title. And yet that title was a recovery, and, like the casket brought up from the sunken wreck by the diver, carried in it great treasure. For Paul wrote: "And ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath; but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord."

How early that nurture begins—if indeed it can even be said to have a beginning—we need not inquire. It should be the atmosphere into which the new life is born. The child should no more be able to recall its first breath than he can recall his own first step. It goes with the birthright and is part of it. To the children that have not known anything, to the little ones that cannot discern between their right hand and their left hand, it belongs. Can any one say when feeling begins in the mind of a boy or girl? The things which still affect you the most keenly are the things which cannot be traced to their source:

> A boy's will is the wind's will,
> And the thoughts of youth are long, long thoughts.[1]

It was for a draught from the well of Bethlehem[2] that David longed in the hot day, begirt with the enemy, but when first he drank of that well no Philistines rose between him and its cool waters. The remembrance clung to him through sheepfold,

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[1] Longfellow, "My Lost Youth." [2] 2 Sam. 23 : 16.

court, and camp, and at the moment when his thirst was fiercest the memory was the most tantalizing, until, turned by the valor of his three mighty men into reality, it became a drink offering to be poured out unto the Lord.

At the earliest opportunity, and touching with great care the faculties only half conscious, the parent and pastor should begin the work of Christian nurture. "For before the harvest, when the bud is perfect, and the sour grape is ripening in the flower, he shall both cut off the sprigs with pruning hooks and take away and cut down the branches."[1] Millet, afterward to win fame as the painter of the "Angelus," was but a little boy when he saw his first sunset on the waves; his first, I say, because first in the impression which it made upon his mind. The splendor of the scene threw the child into an ecstasy of delight. "My son," his father said, taking off his cap reverently, "it is God." The boy never failed after that to associate with the setting sun the power and the goodness of God. There were after years of willful wandering from him, but at length the influence started by the profound word from his father brought him to his true self and to his true home. And so, to lift this truth to its highest setting, we may say with Horace Bushnell,[2] speaking

[1] Isa. 18: 5. [2] "Christian Nurture," pp. 11, 12.

of the children thus early nurtured in the Christian life:

> Perhaps they will go through a rough mental struggle at some future day and seem to others and to themselves there to have entered on a Christian life. And yet it may be true that there was still some root of right principle established in their childhood which is here only quickened and developed, as when Christians of mature age are revived in their piety after a period of spiritual lethargy, for it is conceivable that regenerate character may exist long before it is fully and formally developed.

At present I am saying nothing further as to the more definite and formal training which must surely make an important part of this nurture. So much depends upon early impressions unconsciously received that I have been content to dwell chiefly upon them. And the pastor will be remembered by the boy as that boy grows up and leaves home, and when sermon and prayer fade out of his memory, more by what he was than by what he said, just as to his old students at Rugby Thomas Arnold was not a schoolmaster so much as a very incarnation of character in the class room and of devotion in the chapel. But Christian nurture is incomplete if it depends only or even mainly upon the power of a good example or the atmosphere of a godly home. There must be careful teaching based upon the truths revealed or emphasized in the Bible. It was when Jehosha-

phat sought the Lord so that his heart was lifted up in his ways that he instituted throughout his whole kingdom the most complete system of biblical instruction of which we have any record. His chosen officers "taught in Judah ; and had the book of the law of the Lord with them, and went about throughout all the cities of Judah and taught the people." [1]

Equally explicit, in its insistence on an intelligent study of Scripture, is the better known picture of Ezra standing in the midst of the people in Jerusalem, on his pulpit of wood, and to the men and women and all that could hear with understanding, reading in the law of God distinctly and giving the sense and causing the people to understand the meaning.

To do this is primarily the work of the parents with their children, but also of the minister as well. The crown and consummation of Christian nurture is not an ability to repeat in their order all the books of the Bible, or to pass examinations on Scripture geography or on the lives of the Herods. These are but things which accompany salvation. What we must aim at supremely is the development of the Christian life.

My chief concern in this chapter has been with that. I have tried to show how strong and deep

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[1] 2 Chron. 17 : 7–9.

is the divine love for children and what ample provision has always been made by our heavenly Father for their religious education. Starting with the far-off days when the roots of national life were struck firm and deep in the family and when the father was also the priest to his household, we have followed the divine method through the life of the Hebrew people, catching the voice of the child in the simple festivals which gladdened the year at home, and the more splendid celebrations in the holy city to which now and again he was carried. We have seen how he went, on the week day and on the Sabbath also, to the synagogue, associating the acquisition of all knowledge with the fear of the Lord, which was the beginning of it all. We have mingled with the throng that surrounded Jesus of Nazareth and watched his tender care of the little ones, and listened to his profound teaching as to children and the kingdom, and seen his divine glory as it displayed itself in raising young life from the grave. There was no break in the line of testimony when the present Jesus became the ascended Lord. No directions are clearer than those which Paul gave to parent and children alike, and no more attractive or affecting picture is there than that of the old veteran and his young companions, Timothy and Titus.

I have endeavored to indicate some of the corrupting causes to which we must trace the partial

loss of this "tale of olden time, long, long ago"; and with far keener zest, I trust, we have seen the recovery of the true idea—so closely bound up with alike the Old and the New Testament—under the evangelical revival of our own era, which gave to us the institution of the Sunday-school and the insistence on Christian nurture. It was only after he had served a painful apprenticeship to experience that Richard Baxter, himself a prince in the pulpit, discovered that the pulpit is not the only throne which the preacher has to fill, but that "education is as properly a means of grace as preaching."[1] The truth which came so late to him he might have found in the old book of Proverbs: "Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it."[2]

[1] Bushnell, p. 25. [2] Prov. 22 : 6.

II

THE MODERN SUNDAY-SCHOOL IN THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

Characteristics of the century. What led to the establishment of Sunday-schools. The impulse of human sympathy. The evangelical revival. Precursors of the Modern Sunday-school. Borromeo, Alleine, and others. The originators of the Sunday-school. Robert Raikes, Rowland Hill, Charles of Bala, Hannah More. Immediate results.

II

THE MODERN SUNDAY-SCHOOL IN THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

We are in the habit of tracing the Sunday-schools of the present time to the eighteenth century. While this is true, it needs to be remembered that the causes which led to their being established were in operation long before the century dawned, and also that the first half of the century gave scant promise of the great awakening in morals and religion with which it closed. It was a period of political and spiritual stagnation. The statesmanship of Sir Robert Walpole expressed its highest ambition in his maxim, "*Quieta non movere.*" The bishops of the Established Church of England anticipated in their conduct and often in their counsels Talleyrand's famous advice, "Above all things, no zeal." The Nonconformists were almost equally afraid of enthusiasm, and even the devout Philip Doddridge, while praying for a revival of religion, did not dare wish for it to come in his time.

The beginning of the eighteenth century was a period of moral barrenness. Politics were corrupt,

social life was coarse, and religion, like some shallow stream creeping through a region of marsh and sand, moved slowly if it moved at all. The brilliant Granville had the clergy as well as the laity in his thoughts when, in 1709, he wrote to his friend Harley: "We constantly remember you, I can't say in our prayers, for I fear we don't all pray, but in our cups, for we all drink." Even fifty years after this, the genial bachelor, Gilbert White, the vicar of Selborne and the chronicler in charming language of its natural history, loved to fill his house with guests and to dance on Saturday night almost to the dawn of Sunday morning.

More to our purpose is it to recognize in passing the widespread youthful depravity, and of this we shall find abundant proof as we go on. A coarse and brutal age registers its vices in the children. As the Talmud puts it: "What the child says out of doors he has learned indoors."

It is true that the age was not lacking—to reverse a well-known epigram—in the excellencies of its defects. Rude it certainly was, but it was not soft; coarse it was, and also strong. The British people prided themselves on their vigor. Protracted wars had indeed impoverished the land and robbed the fields of a large proportion of the tillers of the soil, but it should be acknowledged, as one among the few helpful symptoms with which the century opened, that poor and sordid as

were the conditions of large masses of the population of England, never had a higher value been set on the national virtue of courage.

Already the forces were gathering which would appeal to this virtue and summon it to a nobler conflict than the main in the cock-pit or the wrestling bout on the village green. They were strong men and women who before the century reached its third quarter responded to the passionate appeals of George Whitefield and built themselves into the society organized by John Wesley.

The spiritual torpor of the eighteenth century was effectually broken before that century touched its fiftieth year. Doddridge had written his "Rise and Progress of Religion in the Soul"; Wesley had made the Holy Club of Oxford a spiritual force in the community; Whitefield had joined two continents with the cry, "O Earth, Earth, Earth, hear the word of the Lord"; John Newton had yielded his sturdy and genial heart to the service of Christ and his church; and in New England, Jonathan Edwards, combining with a metaphysical acumen still peerless in its force an imagination that Dante might have envied, had flung himself into the religious quickening of his parish in Northampton and started a train of consequences which aimed at nothing less than the evangelization of the world. The practical benevolence of Robert Raikes; the missionary zeal of

William Carey; the philanthropy of Hannah More; the persuasive eloquence of William Wilberforce, consecrated to the cause of freedom; and the social reform of Thomas Chalmers, in which he anticipated so much of the work to which the church is giving itself to-day, all these, directly or indirectly, had their rise in the first half of the eighteenth century. When the sun of the century sloped toward the west an impulse of human sympathy was coming to be its chief glory. For the prisoner languishing in his foul cell, for the lunatic in his fetters, for the miserable waif in the workhouse, and the hapless climbing boy in the chimney, relief was at hand. "The moral, the philanthropic, the religious ideas which have molded English society into its present shape" were already active.[1] And when John Wesley wrote, in 1784, "God begins his work in children," he showed where the emphasis of reformation must be laid. The Sunday-school was an inevitable consequence of this strong impulse of human sympathy which throbbed in the blood of the country a hundred and fifty years ago.

The evangelical revival of the same period can scarcely be separated from this quickened philanthropy. The one was the works, the other the faith of the same great movement. Mr. John

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[1] J. R. Green.

Morley says that "with the death of Cromwell the brief life of Puritan theocracy in England expired. It was a phase of a movement that left an inheritance of some noble thoughts, the memory of a brave struggle for human freedom, and a procession of strong and capacious master spirits, with Milton and Cromwell at their head. Political ends miscarry and the revolutionary leader treads a path of fire." But he lights up the gloom of this apparent failure of a great experience when he adds: "It is our true wisdom to learn how to combine sane and equitable historic verdicts with a just value for those eternal qualities of high endeavor on which, amid all changes of fashion, formula, direction, the world's best hopes depend." Without any doubt the religious revival of the eighteenth century was a return to Puritanism, but it was the Puritanism of the Protestant Reformation rather than that of Oliver Cromwell. "The glorious Reformation" was one theme of which the devout members of the Established Church of England never tired, and Hannah More could not forgive her favorite *protégé*, Macaulay, whose studies she had directed, because in the pages of the "Edinburgh Review" he expressed his admiration for the tenacious vitality of popery. She was so grieved at his defection that she changed her purpose of leaving him her library, a change of which the pain was, we fear, greater to her than was the loss to him.

When we speak of the modern Sunday-school as the child of the eighteenth century we must not forget the good work of earlier years, nor when we call Robert Raikes its founder must we fail to do justice to those who preceded him in the enterprise now so closely associated with his name. The story of the Sunday-school movement cannot be fairly told unless we recognize that here, as elsewhere,

> The healing of the world
> Is in God's nameless saints.

Many of them have no memorial on earth, and many more are barely known. An accident revealed the fact, for instance, that some years before Raikes began his work in Gloucester, "a quiet, studious, unobtrusive Independent minister"[1] at Nailsworth, not far away, was in the habit of teaching the children of his congregation on Sunday. He may have been one of many who established and maintained schools for the religious instruction of children independent of the movement started by Robert Raikes. Indeed, two hundred years before this time, Cardinal Borromeo drew upon himself the hatred of the monastic order by establishing among the churches of northern Italy a number of Sunday-schools. For teaching poor children to read in the cathedral of

[1] "Robert Raikes : The Man and His Work," Harris, p. 138.

Milan he was charged with being "a desecrator of the Sabbath, the sanctuary, and his priesthood. His Sunday-school was thought to be a dangerous innovation." In the beautiful parish church of St. Mary Magdalen, in the west of England town of Taunton, the saintly Joseph Alleine catechised and instructed children in the middle of the seventeenth century. There is no pleasanter picture than that which shows us the vicar of Catterick in Yorkshire, Theophilus Lindsay, just a hundred years later, getting about him the village boys on Sunday afternoons and forming them into a large circle, "himself holding a Bible open in his hand, with which he walked slowly around, giving it regularly in succession to the boys," [1] so that each read the book in his turn and had the passage explained." Mr. Lindsay subsequently became a Unitarian, and a monument in the forecourt of the Unitarian Chapel, Essex Street, London, associates his name with the names of Cardinal Borromeo and Robert Raikes as the "originators of Sunday-schools."

Among the friends of children, and the most successful workers for them, we should certainly mention Isaac Watts, whose "Divine Songs" anticipated by nearly two centuries the children's book which some of the best authors of the present

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[1] "Robert Raikes and Northamptonshire Sunday-schools," p. 1.

day have given us. The change in public sentiment in this matter of writing for children may be inferred from his words: "I well know that some of my friends imagine my time is employed in too mean a service while I write for babes; but I content myself with this thought, that nothing is too mean for a servant of Christ to engage in if he can thereby most effectually promote the kingdom of his blessed Maker."

Probably it would be fair to claim for Robert Raikes that what he did was to revive and organize the work of instructing children in the truths of the Christian religion. This work had never entirely died out. The catechism is almost as old as the church. Its value in the estimation of the clergy rose or declined with the rise or decline of religion. Too often it "so fell into disuse that when practised it seemed a new thing and pious donors gave legacies for its perpetuation."[1]

The Reformation recognized its worth and insisted under heavy penalties that it should be maintained. With the Puritans it "grew into a kind of domestic inquisition," especially in Scotland, and many among the Nonconformists of England continued to employ it as the medium for the religious teaching of their children. When Robert Raikes writes that "Providence was pleased

[1] Harris, "Robert Raikes," p. 155.

to make me the instrument of introducing Sunday-schools," he had in mind the schools of his own system. A layman himself, he took the work out of the hands of the clergy to the extent that henceforth it was no longer doomed to depend on their faithfulness for being done or to lie at the mercy of their negligence for being left undone.

We have thus far been tracing the causes which led to the establishment of Sunday-schools in the eighteenth century, a century which before it was fifty years old saw the stagnation of its earlier period finally broken up, although it needed all the forces which the evangelical leaders could muster to lift Great Britain from her spiritual torpor and put a soul behind the ribs of death. The modern Sunday-school system, however, was not to originate with Methodism or with the clergy of the Established Church of England. In common with other great philanthropic enterprises, it was to be born in the heart of a layman and to number among its earliest advocates men and women who were well known in the ranks of business, politics, literature, and fashion. Of how much service this was to the movement we shall see if we glance at some of the prominent figures in the early history of Sunday-schools.

By common consent the first place in the group belongs to Robert Raikes, who was born in the old cathedral city of Gloucester in 1736, lived

there all his life, and there died in 1811. He came of good Yorkshire stock, and his father, who was printer and publisher of the "Gloucester Journal," was fearless in maintaining the liberty of the press at the time when it was gagged and banned, and high-minded in his resolve that in an age of moral corruption his paper should be kept clean and sweet. Ability and integrity had their reward, and the Raikes family has not ceased to boast of its number of men of mark in Church and State down to the present time. At twenty-one, by the death of his father, Robert found himself sole proprietor of the newspaper, and his philanthropic spirit can be detected in its columns from the time that he became its editor. He made his paper "a means of communication between the prisoners and debtors, whom he found naked and starving and rotting in the jail." [1]

A very human as well as a very humane person was Robert Raikes; gay and genial in temperament, with a certain childlike pleasure in his own success and a simplicity of mind which never cultivated the English virtue of reserve. He was fastidious in his tastes, in his dislike of dirt and disturbance, in his shrinking from what was coarse and rude. Although in the estimation of the cathedral city, where social lines would be drawn

[1] Harris, p. 103.

strictly, he was in trade, he maintained a generous house, had a handsome service of plate, and took some pride in saying, "I keep no shop." The circumstance which led to his interesting himself in the depraved and neglected children of Gloucester may have been that when he was reading proof in his office he was "much annoyed by children playing under his very nose." And if this offended his taste, his moral sense was still more shocked when through the window came their curses as they quarreled and fought over their hop-scotch, five-stones, and chuck.

Perhaps to moralize was a characteristic of the age in which he lived, but the moralizing of the eighteenth century too often ended on itself. Not so in the case of Raikes. "Ignorance," [1] he wrote, "is the root of the degradation everywhere around us"; "idleness is a consequence of ignorance"; "prevention is better than cure"; "religion must wait on improved education among the masses before we shall be able to make much advance, but religion and education may go together." A more excellent way than begging in the columns of his newspaper for pence for starving prisoners was now in sight. It took him twenty years to come to the conclusion that any genuine reformation must begin, not in the cells of the Gloucester

[1] Harris, p. 72.

jails, but in the gutters of Gloucester streets, that even his Sunday-schools were not sufficient, but that education the whole week through must be tried. The conclusion once reached was held to tenaciously to the end. That he was a layman and a journalist in the tide of public affairs, and given to regarding them as a citizen rather than as an ecclesiastic, was an augury for good, but it was fortunate also that with a message to a country in which Church meant the national establishment and State meant the government of King George III., he was a loyal Episcopalian. William King, a woolen card-maker, who was a Dissenter and a follower of Whitefield, talking over the desecration of the Sabbath with him, said that he himself had tried to open a Sunday-school in his native village, but "that from multitude of business through the week he could not attend to it as he wished." "It will not do for Dissenters," rejoined Raikes, "it must be from the Church." He was attached to his sovereign, lighted bonfires when the news of British victories reached the office, attended with alacrity the mock execution of Tom Paine (found guilty of treason and sentenced as an outlaw), and read the book of Revelation and the Prophets for references to the politics of France and her bewildered republic.

When, in a very quiet way, he started his first Sunday-school, it was for boys only. An old man

who lived into the sixties of the last century remembered being sent to a Sunday-school in Sooty Alley, opposite the City Prison,—called Sooty Alley because the chimney sweeps lived there,—and while he did not recall learning anything, his memory carrying him back over eighty years, testified that there were no girls in the school and that the boys were "turrible bad." This was in 1780. Within three years the young savages were brought into some kind of order, the girls, little better at first than they, were admitted, and when William Wilberforce was brought to see the school the boys had learned to bow and the girls to courtesy when strangers entered the room. The children repeated simple prayers and the catechism, and answered Bible questions, and sang Doctor Watts' hymns. When Mr. Raikes marched his children to church every Sunday their clean clothes and good behavior made them conspicuous in the congregation. They no longer stuck pins into one another during service, nor fought and swore so that the parish beadle had to be called in to expel them. The fastidious Mr. Raikes, whom his fellow-citizens were wont to sneer at as a dandy, sat among them and kept them under control by the power of his presence as much as by the fear of his rod.

Closely associated with Robert Raikes was Rev. Thomas Stock, a clergyman, who was also

headmaster of the Gloucester Cathedral School. The two men seem to have met by accident one day, and, comparing notes, the one with an experience gathered from editing his paper and visiting the jail, the other with an experience gained in country parishes where he had tried to teach the children their catechism, determined that something must be done to reclaim the young ruffians swarming in the streets around them. Stock was a man of gentler spirit than Raikes, with his temper under better control, and a nature patient and yet firm.[1] It is said that the rules which he drew up for the conduct of his schools gave the model for those adopted later by the Sunday-school committees. The old house still shown in St. Catharine Street, Gloucester, although it has been changed somewhat in the course of years, is substantially the same as it was when "a school was established in it by the joint enterprise of Raikes and Stock."[2] To this hour the house goes by the name of "Robert Raikes' first Sunday-school."

The fact that Raikes lived in a dull cathedral city, hard to stir to any enthusiasm or win over to any new methods, makes his success all the more remarkable. But it also accounts for the comparative indifference with which for a long time his work was regarded, as well as for the feeling

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[1] Harris, p. 107. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 35.

of depression against which even his gay nature and sanguine temperament were not always proof. "I walk alone," he said. "It seems as if I had discovered a new country where no adventurer chooses to follow." But this was far from being a fair statement of the case. Into the new country which he had so far discovered the quickened evangelical life of England was not long in following him. In London, Rowland Hill, the minister of Surrey Chapel and one of the most original of men, in the foremost rank of the pulpit orators of his time, and responsive to the cry of humanity whenever its tones reached him, began a Sunday-school about 1784. It is interesting to note that in the schoolroom of his chapel the Religious Tract Society was formed five years later, and that it grew out of the demands of the new enterprise. In the same room in 1803 the Sunday-school Union was inaugurated.[1] Closely connected with these movements was the work of the Rev. T. Charles, of Bala, who, beginning Sunday-schools in Wales, was gladdened by a wonderful religious awakening in his parish and the whole country-side, largely attributable to the Sunday-school instruction. From this revival sprang the call for Welsh Bibles, and it was when he made his way to London, and before his colleagues on the com-

[1] "Northamptonshire Sunday-schools," p. 18.

mittee of the Religious Tract Society pleaded that a society should be formed to supply the Scriptures to the Welsh people in their own tongue, that Rev. Joseph Hughes, secretary of the Tract Society, uttered the memorable words, "If for Wales, why not also for the empire and the world?" from which grew the British and Foreign Bible Society. The Sunday-school was a parent of the other two societies, in the same way as demand is the parent of supply.

What Robert Raikes did for the children of the city, Hannah More did for the children of the country.[1] One of five sisters, daughters of a Suffolk gentleman of damaged fortune but high character, who became the head master of a school in Gloucester, Hannah More sat on her father's knee as a little child listening to the poetry of Virgil, Horace, and Homer, and at seventeen had written a drama to be acted by the pupils of her sisters' school which at once brought her into notice. She was twenty-seven when she paid her first visit to London. Garrick, who had met with a criticism of his acting from her pen, introduced her to his wife, in whom she found her most intimate friend; Reynolds, the greatest living English painter, made dinners in her honor; at the house of Mrs. Delaney she touched a former generation

[1] Born 1745.

when she shook hands with Horace Walpole; the bluestockings of London welcomed her as one of themselves; Edmund Burke, the incomparable orator, paid her compliments as sincere as they were graceful; and the famous Samuel Johnson approached her in his most affable mood, toying with a macaw on his finger and reciting a verse from a hymn which she had composed. Her sprightly letters remain as the chronicle of her social and literary triumphs. As we read them, however, we notice their tone growing more serious. Even when at the crest of the wave of fashion she had craved a quiet which London could not give, and in the intoxicating hour when her play of "Percy" ran neck and neck with "The School for Scandal" in the race for popularity, "being of the Christian faction," she firmly declined all invitations to Sunday dinners and routs. The death of Garrick and her close companionship with his widow (whose "domestic chaplain" Hannah was jocularly called) cut her aloof from the pleasures of the town, and before long her heart was wholly given to God.[1] She settled at Cowslip Green, ten miles from Bristol and ten from the romantic Cheddar Cliffs, where she was so shocked at the condition of the villagers about her that she wrote to a friend, "I have devoted the rem-

[1] "Hannah More's Memoirs," Vol. I., p. 400.

nant of my life to the poor and those that have no helper, and if I can do them little good I can at least sympathize with them, and I know it is some comfort for a forlorn creature to be able to say, 'There is something that cares for me.'" From that time until her death, at eighty-eight years of age, she remained constant to her resolve. To supply the spiritual and intellectual needs of village children, "immersed in deplorable ignorance and depravity," she opened first one school and then another, battling with the prejudice of the farmers, the brutality of the squires, and the open or concealed opposition of the parsons, and bringing to bear on the boors of Somersetshire villages all the arts of coquetry which had once been practised in the drawing rooms of London. "Miss Wilberforce," she wrote to William Wilberforce, the most fascinating of philanthropists, who shared with herself and others the expenses of her enterprise, "would have been shocked had she seen the petty tyrants whose insolence I stroked and tamed, the ugly children I praised, the pointers and spaniels I caressed, the cider I commended, and the wine I swallowed."[1] In the end she conquered. The schools were rapidly filled with boys and girls. The teaching in the class on Sunday naturally paved the way for simple services for older people.

[1] "Memoirs," Vol. I., p. 339.

The clergy were shamed into activity and found their hands again. Her house at Barley Wood "became a Mecca whither pilgrims of all sorts resorted; not the leaders of the evangelical school alone, but many others came to listen to her brilliant conversation, yield to her enthusiastic philanthropy, and own that here was a religion which was as cheerful as it was sincere and as inspiring as it was practical."[1] It is easy to see why the Sunday-schools of Robert Raikes and Hannah More attracted a notice which might have been denied to the school of the clergyman of the parish or the minister of the dissenting meeting-house. It was impossible to look on them as simply work demanded by a sense of duty. The journalist who was thoroughly successful in his honorable calling and the literary lion who for more than one season was the rage of London deliberately devoted their lives to reaching the children of city slums and country hamlets with the truths of the gospel. Evidently religion was no profession to be practised by the clergy only, but rather a life to be lived out by every true follower of Him who went about doing good. Business paused to watch Robert Raikes as he marshaled his waifs into church, and frivolity grew serious, at least for a moment, as the irresistible Hannah

[1] Overton, "The English Church in the Nineteenth Century," p. 91.

More was seen ministering to the plowboys of Somersetshire. This was religion in earnest. It meant something. It was the happy fate of Hannah More, living to extreme old age, "to see the battle against vice and ignorance, which at first she waged if not single-handed at any rate with the support of a very few, ultimately carried on by a large and formidable army in all parts of the country."[1] She is really a link between the chapter in the history of Sunday-schools which tells the story of their birth and that which details the story of their progress. At the immediate results of the Sunday-school enterprise we must now glance in closing this part of our subject.

In 1780 the Sunday-school was an experiment. Within five years it was an assured success. The "Gentleman's Magazine," still famous in the history of literature from its association with the early struggles of Samuel Johnson, and at that time the most influential journal in Great Britain, understands that "the establishment of Sunday-schools (1784) is becoming very general." To "the truly benevolent Mr. Raikes," it informs its readers, "it is incredible with what rapidity this grain of mustard seed is extending its branches over the kingdom." Raikes estimated the number of children under Sunday instruction in Eng-

[1] Overton, p. 91.

land and Wales in 1780 at two hundred and fifty thousand; the Bishop of Salisbury warmly recommends the schools; the Bishop of Llandaff takes some steps toward introducing them into the large towns of his diocese; the Dean of Lincoln believes that the contemplation of criminal England "would be a gloomy office but for the establishment of Sunday-schools"; the devoted Fletcher, of Madeley, begins six schools in his district, and marks not only moral reformation but spiritual quickening among both young and old.[1]

In America the growth of the Sunday-school system was so general and so rapid that it is hard to say just where the first seed was sown. A Sunday-school was organized as early as 1780 in Virginia under the directors of Bishop Asbury; in 1791 Philadelphia saw a Sunday-school society formed to secure religious instruction for poor children, which continues active still; in the same year a Sunday-school was started in Boston; and two years after, Kate Ferguson, a Negro, began one in New York; in 1797 the first Baptist Sunday-school was begun at Pawtucket, R. I.,[2] and was modeled upon the plan of the Raikes' schools in England; before the century closed the Sunday-school was an accepted and essential agency of any progressive church; while out of systematic

[1] "Johnson's Cyclopædia," art. "Sunday-schools."

[2] "A Century of Baptist Achievement," p. 236.

Sunday-school movements in Pittsburg, Pa., in Philadelphia, in New York, and in Boston, grew the American Sunday-school Union, which was organized in 1824. The first Sunday-school in Canada would seem to have been organized by Rev. William Smart, a young pioneer preacher, at Brockville, in the year 1811, almost immediately on his coming to America from England.

Of course there was opposition. The bishops were by no means unanimous in their approval, and many of their clergy were open in their opposition. The alarmists feared that "the education of the poor would unfit them for menial service, raise discontent, and foment rebellion." In Scotland a prominent Presbyterian minister declared that while Sunday-schools might be needed in England, where few parents in common life were qualified to instruct their children in the principles of true religion, no such argument held good in regard to his native country. Sunday-schools were "reflections on every parish where they were appointed." Yet this was the very country in which Thomas Chalmers before long unearthed the depravity of Glasgow, and where within fifty years Thomas Guthrie, plunging into the reeking wynds of Edinburgh, founded ragged schools. The Sunday-school, however, was destined to conquer, and in 1798 a society was formed in Edinburgh called "The Sabbath Evening School Society," having

for its object the extension of the system to the country at large. In the north of Ireland an independent effort on behalf of the neglected children of a country district was made by Doctor Kennedy,[1] curate of Bright parish, County Down, and out of a singing class established by him in 1774 grew a school held regularly every Sunday for an hour and a half before the morning service. It was not until eleven years later that he learned of the work of Robert Raikes and remodeled his own school on the Gloucester plan.

The moral reformation wrought by the early Sunday-schools was matter for general remark. "No plan," wrote Adam Smith, "has promised to effect a change of manner with equal ease since the days of the apostles."[2] Children once conspicuous for brutality and profaneness became quiet and respectful and Sunday revels and wakes were suppressed. Formerly a day of licentious idleness, Sunday was now in hundreds of parishes a day of public worship. Children who used to go about begging of any stranger that came into the village now went to church and behaved well. At Bolton, as the children sang their hymns, John Wesley thought that their voices could not be excelled unless it might be by "the singing of angels in our Father's house." As they grew up with a

[1] Harris, p. 181. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 129.

knowledge of reading, the young farmers, abandoning the public house, took to reading, and used "their bacon racks in the double capacity of book-cases."[1] "The Sunday-schools established by Mr. Raikes," says Green, "were the beginnings of popular education. By her writings and by her own personal example Hannah More drew the sympathy of England to the poverty and crime of the agricultural laborer." It is not claiming too much for Robert Raikes and Hannah More to say that by their devotion to the children of the poor in city and country they prepared the way for the career of the Earl of Shaftesbury, and made possible the reforms in the treatment of the boys and girls in the factory and on the farm in which his great name is embalmed.

The second half of the eighteenth century, in striking contrast with the first, saw both England and America stirred to a new passion for the Christian life. The evangelical awakening which we associate with the consecrated generalship of Wesley, the pleadings of Jonathan Edwards, the apostolic zeal of Whitefield, the missionary enterprise of Carey, found in the Sunday-school a most fertile field for prayer sowing and joyful reaping. George III. recognized the true source of England's strength when, visiting a Sunday-school at

[1] Harris, pp. 79, 80.

Brentford, he uttered the wish "that every poor child in my kingdom should be taught to read the Bible." The king builded better than he knew when he said this, for he unconsciously defined what the true mission of the Sunday-school was to be. Following the Revolutionary War, the earlier efforts of the Sunday-school in England and America "were in line with those of Robert Raikes in England, religious teaching being held secondary to secular and moral instruction. In proportion as secular and public schools were provided for communities, the work so changed that religious teaching became the dominant purpose." [1] In the Baptist Sunday-school at Pawtucket, to which I have already referred as organized in 1797, it was not until eight years later that the distinctly religious features were introduced.[2] Slowly the Bible came to its own, but by the close of the eighteenth century, while very much remained to be done,—as indeed much remains to be done still,—it was generally recognized that the Sunday-school was not a means of moral reformation alone, but more and also better. It was a medium for distinctively Christian teaching, fairly to be included in the Commission of its Divine Founder: "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature."

[1] Dr. C. R. Blackall.

[2] "A Century of Baptist Achievement," p. 236.

III

THE MODERN SUNDAY-SCHOOL IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

The decline of Sunday-schools with the opening century. Causes in England. Secular education. Political conditions. Growth of cities and increase of child labor. Inadequate organization. The revived interest in Sunday-schools due (1) to better organization ; Sunday-school Unions ; statistics of growth, Great Britain and America ; (2) to better teaching ; the catechism ; the use of the Bible ; the International Lesson Series.

III

THE MODERN SUNDAY-SCHOOL IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

It will be remembered that in the early days of the Sunday-school movement there was, in England certainly, a necessity for better secular teaching. How to read and write and even to cypher the scholar needed to learn before he could with any measure of intelligence study the Bible. In the estimation of Robert Raikes ignorance was the root of the degradation which he found everywhere around him. Even religion itself, said he, had "to wait on improved education." Simultaneously, about the beginning of the nineteenth century two men became interested in popular education, and, I had almost said, stumbled on a plan of employing the elder scholars to teach the younger. This plan lay at the foundation of the systems with which their names are associated. These two men were Dr. Andrew Bell and Joseph Lancaster.[1] When a chaplain at Madras, Doctor Bell happened in an early morning ride to pass by a Malabar school where he saw a number of children seated

[1] Overton, p. 236, *et seq.*

on the ground writing with their fingers on the sand. It suggested itself to him that the older scholars in the British Military Orphan Asylum could under his care teach the younger ones their letters in this primitive way. Out of this sprang the pupil-teacher system. A few years later a poor Quaker lad, barely twenty years of age, named Joseph Lancaster, obtained from his father the use of a room in the Borough Road, in London, in which he might keep a cheap school for the poor in the neighborhood. To this school scholars came in abundance, but money did not. He could not afford to pay an assistant, and so was "compelled to make use of the services of his pupils to teach each other as monitors, and this practice, the sheer offspring of necessity, ended in the demonstration and definition of the power of one master to teach hundreds." Doctor Bell was an Episcopalian, and held that the national religion must be the foundation of national education. The parochial system was ready to his hand, and so, under the "National Society," "national schools" were planted or revived in the parishes of England. Joseph Lancaster was a Quaker, and believed that secular education, while it was not to be irreligious, should be strictly undenominational. Out of this conviction came the "British and Foreign School Society," with its widespread network of British schools. I glance at the for-

gotten controversy as to the priority of Bell or Lancaster only to call attention to its influence on Sunday-schools. Undoubtedly the revived interest in national education hastened the settlement of the moot question whether the combination of secular with religious instruction in the Sunday-school needed to be any longer continued. But another result was that the growth of the spirit of nonconformity led to the conclusion that the children of parents who were dissenters ought to be at liberty to go to their own places of worship, instead of being marched, as in the time of Robert Raikes and Hannah More, to the parish church. This was the arrangement which Joseph Lancaster made in his schools. Plainly the lines between conformity and nonconformity to the Established Church were to be tightly drawn in the matter of both sacred and secular schooling. When the nineteenth century began, Sunday-schools were slowly feeling their way to their true vocation. It was only twenty years since the first school was opened by Raikes in Gloucester. The prospering gale was not yet filling out the canvas of the good ship, and at times her sails flapped ominously in the wind. The early years of the new century were indeed in many directions years not of progress, but of decline. In America, according to Dr. H. Clay Trumbull, "Bible study and Bible teaching were at a lower ebb than at

any earlier period."[1] In Great Britain, neither Church nor State was clear in its mind as to what this innovation, with its strong infusion of the lay and voluntary elements, portended. The French Revolution had outraged the conservative prejudices, which the country gentlemen of England mistook for principles, and strengthened the conviction that the masses of the people could only be kept quiet by being kept ignorant. Sunday-schools were or would be "nurseries of Jacobinism." Even a bishop of intelligence so far violated the usual episcopal caution as to declare of some of the schools held in connection with the conventicles of the dissenters that there was much ground for suspicion "that sedition and atheism are the real objects of these institutions." "Indeed," he added with unpardonable vagueness, "in some places this is known to be the case." This alarm was neither widespread nor long-lived. The cure for it, as that same bishop pointed out, was for the clergy of the Church of England to promote the establishment of Sunday-schools in their parishes. As a rule the clergy took this advice, and "at the commencement of the nineteenth century the Sunday-school had become a part of the regular organization of almost every well-worked parish."[2]

A more powerful reason for the temporary

[1] Harris, p. 220.

[2] Overton, p. 245.

eclipse in the progress of Sunday-schools in the Old Country is to be found in the decline of the evangelical party. It was still indeed the strongest party in the national church, and remained so for twenty-five years more, but its leaders were passing away, and the fervor of its first zeal was dying out. We need also to remember that the Sunday-school was not at this time a purely voluntary system. Teachers were still paid in many instances. The need for secular instruction was still recognized. The Board school, now almost universal in England, with its improved methods of teaching, came nearer to the sunset than to the dawn of the century. The Sunday-school was not as yet so entirely religious as to appeal to the passion for souls, which was the distinguishing feature of the evangelical revival, a passion which held its own even when the revival was treasured among the traditions of a great past. Nor had that revival laid hold on the mass of the clergy, otherwise than to either shame or stimulate them into a life somewhat worthier of their sacred calling and less indifferent to their ordination vows. The clergyman of that time was no longer the clergyman of Fielding's novels, but neither was he the minister of Paul's letter to Titus.[1] "He farmed his own glebe," says Froude, "kept horses,

[1] Overton, p. 16.

shot and hunted moderately, and mixed in general society. His wife and daughters looked after the poor and taught in the Sunday-school." The decline in the first enthusiasm for Sunday-schools was only one symptom of the decline in evangelical religion, or, as perhaps it would be fairer to put it, in the failure of evangelical religion to overcome the inertness of the long years of spiritual lethargy and unfaithfulness.[1] The Sunday-school had not, so far, found its feet. It had not defined the path which it was hereafter to pursue.

What has just been said of the Sunday-school is also true of Great Britain at large. She had the excellence of "the giant's strength," but too often she used it tyrannously, "like a giant." She had not yet learned how to control her own resources. The development of machinery and the application of the power of steam had given an immense impulse to her manufactories, and—what we need to notice for the bearing it has upon our subject—the great centers where these manufactories were being carried on "became studded with vast mills surrounded by a densely crowded population, and a demand for the labor of women and children had been created which gave rise to frightful abuses and cruelties." [2] The village life of England was no longer the country's chief pride. The

[1] Overton, p. 5.

[2] Hodder, "The Seventh Earl of Shaftesbury," p. 20.

population of the kingdom was increasing by gigantic strides, and that population was centering, a black ominous mass, in the manufacturing towns. To meet this changed condition of things, neither the government nor the church was ready. To quote the biographer of the Earl of Shaftesbury :

> There were no efficient educational laws in existence ; industrial schools, mechanics' institutes, workingmen's clubs were unknown ; the poor laws were pauperizing and degrading ; the science of sanitation, a free newspaper press, limited liability, employers' liability, all these had yet to be. The church was in a state of lethargy, and the vast machinery of philanthropy, with which we have been familiar since the beginning of the second half of the nineteenth century, was only in its infancy.[1]

The increased demand for child labor would naturally affect the Sunday-school. In common with every humane enterprise, if not blocked by the greed of the manufacturer it would be chilled by the indifference of an age to which, as never before, material issues were appealing. For nearly half a century this condition of things was to continue, until Lord Ashley (afterward Earl of Shaftesbury) gave a voice to the people, appealing on behalf of humanity at the bar of public opinion. "We ask," he cried, in bringing in his "Bill for the Regulation of Labor in Factories," "but a slight relaxation of toil, a time to live and a time

[1] Hodder, pp. 114, 115.

to die; a time for those comforts that sweeten life and a time for those duties that adorn it."[1] England, outside of Parliament, was more ready to respond to the dumb appeal of the overworked and underfed millions of her population than were her rulers; but Sir Robert Peel was taken aback when to his sarcastic inquiry whether the House of Commons was prepared to "legislate for all these people," and for restriction of hours of labor in agriculture, the House broke out in a tremendous cheer. Now this battle for the people was also the battle for the Sunday-school.

Undoubtedly the most serious obstacle to the healthful growth of Sunday-schools a hundred years ago was lack of system. The experimental period had not yet been passed. There was no large combination of Sunday-school workers for general conference and united action. Just as the first carriages which ran by steam were modeled on the unmeaning lines of the ancient stagecoach, so the first Sunday-schools were modeled on the lines of the day-schools. The teachers in the schools which Raikes began in Gloucester and Hannah More in Cheddar were all paid. At a Sunday-school anniversary in Northamptonshire, in 1789, we find that, "in addition to the one or two shillings, or even more, received as wages, 'rewards

[1] Hodder, p. 33.

for diligence' were bestowed upon the teachers." [1] The unpaid teacher, in common with the lay preacher, seems to be a fruit of early Methodism. A number of Wesleyan office bearers were lamenting their inability to hire teachers for want of funds, when one of them, bolder than the rest, said, "Let us do the work ourselves." Then, and not before, the work got done. As early as 1785 Wesley records that there were teachers in his schools who gave their services gratuitously. The Sunday-school "treat" of to-day is probably a survival of the time when boys and girls had to be lured to school by pious bribes. Presents of clothes were made to scholars in the days of Raikes: "Straw hats and blue bands," in one instance, "to all the girls; black hats and blue bands to all the boys." By his will Robert Raikes directed that "his Sunday scholars should follow his remains to the grave, each receiving a shilling and a plum cake." The remembrance of these funeral baked meats lingered in the mind of at least one of these scholars, Mrs. Summerhill, until 1880. "On his next birthday after the funeral," she added, "we all went to a house in Bolt Lane and had a good dinner of roast beef and plum pudding." Writing half a century since, the late Hugh Stowell Brown, of Liverpool, says: "It is

[1] "Northamptonshire Schools," pp. 15, 16.

curiously illustrative of the change of customs, that in our first Sunday-school treats, more than forty years ago, the children were regaled with cake and wine." Very slowly the conception of the Sunday-school as an institution formed on the model of the day-school, with rewards and treats thrown in to attract where attendance could not be peremptorily enforced, died out. Between its disappearance and the general acceptance of the modern idea of a purely voluntary institution, in which love was lure enough, there was a time when the Sunday-school declined. In the city of Gloucester, for example, the cradle of the Sunday-school, and ten years before the death of Robert Raikes, unpaid teaching was made general, but not before the old system had shown ominous signs of decrepitude.[1] Six young men, lamenting the decline of Sunday-schools in the city, banded themselves together with the determination to revive them. All their efforts were in vain, until, having resolved to do the work themselves, "gathering one night, after business hours, around a post at the corner of a lane, within twenty yards of the spot where Bishop Hooper was martyred, they clasped each other by the hand, and with reverently uncovered heads resolved that, come what would, Sunday-schools in Gloucester should be

[1] "Northamptonshire Schools," p. 17.

re-established. As a fund to start with they subscribed a half-crown each, and then dividing the city into districts, they canvassed it for scholars. On the following Sunday upward of one hundred children attended, and from that time forward the work prospered."

The revival of Sunday-schools after the setback in the early years of the nineteenth century seems to be chiefly due to general organization and to better methods of teaching.

The British Sunday-school Union dates from 1803, and grew out of a weekly meeting of active teachers who, grappling with the needs of London, "found reason to lament the want of plan and order, and desired some means by which the neglected districts might be supplied with schools and young persons of suitable dispositions be induced to undertake the work."[1] A union "designed to consist of teachers and others actively engaged in some Protestant Sunday-school" was formed. From London it spread over the whole country. In 1824, to guarantee the Christian character of the institution, a doctrinal limitation was resolved upon, as twelve years earlier the schools connected with the union had been recommended not to teach reading, writing, and spelling in their classes on Sunday, "the same being con-

[1] *Cf.* W. H. Watson, "The Sunday-school Union."

sidered as a breach of the sanctity of that day." [1] The earlier publications of the Union, however, virtually acknowledged the general lack of a common school training by furnishing more than one "Introduction to Reading."

After nine years of quiet growth the union "made its proceedings more public" by inviting the teachers and friends of Sunday-schools to a breakfast at the New London Tavern. This essentially British function, worthy of a robust people, became so popular that although the hour of the meal was placed at six o'clock, by 1832 the attendance exceeded one thousand two hundred, and an attempt was made (happily without success) to exclude ladies. The first Sunday-school "Notes" seem to have been published in "The Teachers' Magazine" in 1841, and as early as 1816 a hymn book for teachers was issued, followed six years later by one for the use of scholars. The Sunday-school Union celebrated the jubilee of Sunday-schools on the 14th of September, 1831, the anniversary of Robert Raikes' birthday, and in July, 1852, with the commencement of the fiftieth year of its existence, its own jubilee was commemorated by public meetings in London (including the inevitable breakfast), and by starting a fund to put up a Jubilee Memorial Building, which was completed in 1856.

[1] Watson, p. 19.

The first general Sunday-school Convention grew out of a conference of evangelical Christians of all nations held at Geneva in 1861. It gathered in London in September, 1862, at the time of the International Exhibition, and among the speakers from abroad was Mr. Albert Woodruff, of New York, who had devoted himself to Sunday-school work in France, Italy, and Germany, and Rev. J. H. Vincent, of Illinois, whose name is now united with that of Mr. B. F. Jacobs as prominent in the annals of American Sunday-schools.

In America, as in Great Britain, there were, very early in the history of Sunday-schools, unions of teachers for purposes of fellowship and study. The century, as we have seen, opened with Bible study and Bible teaching at a lower ebb than at any earlier period. It was the Sunday-school wisely and intelligently organized that raised the standard of Christianity in New England and the South, and by and by, as the chief agency of evangelization, in the newer portions of the United States. "The Society of Sunday-schools" in the England of Hannah More's time found a parallel in systematic movements in Pittsburg, in 1809, and in New York five years later, and then in Philadelphia, and so on through other cities. Out of these grew "The American Sunday-school Union," which dates, as we have already seen, from 1824. One distinction between English and American

Sunday-schools seems to have been the greater use made in this country of denominational as distinguished from union methods. For instance, in the annual report of "The Baptist Tract Society," in 1830, a suggestion was made that "the time may come when the number of schools in our denomination will be so great as to require the Baptist Tract Society to publish a series of Sabbath-school books suited to their needs."[1] The Tract Society changed its name to "The American Baptist Publication and Sunday-school Society," and in the end, under the less cumbrous title of "The American Baptist Publication Society," came to be generally recognized "as the specific denominational Sunday-school organization." It would be idle for us to discuss in this place the relative advantage of unionism and denominationalism in Sunday-school work. The evangelical Sunday-schools of America are practically one, as are the evangelical churches. But nothing is gained to the whole by the sacrifice or surrender of what is peculiar to each. The present growth of Sunday-schools, not in numbers only or chiefly, but also in efficiency and intelligence, is the best answer to those who at the prompting of a laudable sentiment would urge any widespread union independent of denominational lines. For all practical

[1] "A Century of Baptist Achievement," pp. 236, 237.

purposes the individual Sunday-school does better as the child of the individual church, under her wing, and subject to her control.

In the early days of the movement little attention was paid to statistics, and one aim of the unions when they were formed was to remedy this lack. But the growth of Sunday-schools in England and Wales was evidently rapid after the torpor of the first years of the nineteenth century had been broken.[1] In 1818 four per cent. of the population were in school, and the total of scholars was four hundred and seventy-seven thousand, two hundred and twenty-five; in 1833 the percentage was eleven; in 1851 it was thirteen and five-tenths; in 1880 fifteen, and in 1887 it had risen to twenty per cent. of the population, and there are reported six hundred and sixteen thousand nine hundred and forty-one teachers, and five million seven hundred and thirty-three thousand three hundred and twenty-five scholars. In the United States more attention would seem to have been given to statistics when once the practice of getting them had been begun. In 1875 there were sixty-four thousand eight hundred and seventy-one schools, seven hundred and fifty-three thousand and sixty teachers, and five million seven hundred and ninety thousand six hundred and eighty-three

[1] Gulick, "The Growth of the Kingdom of God," p. 104.

scholars. In 1896 there were one hundred and thirty-two thousand six hundred and thirty-nine schools, one million three hundred and ninety-six thousand five hundred and eight teachers, and ten million eight hundred and ninety thousand and ninety-two scholars, and at the World's Sunday-school Convention, held in London in 1889,[1] it was announced that about one-sixth of the population of the United States were in Sunday-schools, while the returns of 1899 give the total of one hundred and thirty-eight thousand one hundred and eighty schools, one million four hundred and thirteen thousand nine hundred and eighty-seven officers and teachers, and eleven million four hundred and ninety-seven thousand three hundred and twenty-eight scholars. In Canada, taking the country from the Atlantic to the Pacific, we find ten thousand one hundred and seventy-four schools, seventy-nine thousand five hundred officers and teachers, and a total of scholars amounting to six hundred and fifty-seven thousand four hundred and forty-two.

More than once attention has been called to the fact that the growth of intelligence, the wider education, and the better kind of teaching in the public schools, ran side by side with the spread of Sunday-schools and their general improvement in

[1] "World's Sunday-school Convention Report, 1889," p. 79.

methods and in organization. The harmony between education and religion is nowhere more apparent than in the United States. The Sunday-schools have the brightest young life of the country in their classes as teachers or scholars. The growth of Sunday-schools has been simultaneous with the growth of religion in the schools and colleges. A hundred years ago there were only three professed Christians in Yale College; to-day, out of one thousand four hundred recent graduates of Harvard, only two declared themselves to be unbelievers. "Never before were there so many evangelical church-members among the students of that institution. The Intercollegiate Young Men's Christian Association is the largest college organization in the world. 'No fraternity, no athletic organization, compares with it in size.'"[1]

It is when we pass on to consider the character of the teaching in the Sunday-school that we understand how vast was the growth made in the nineteenth century. When Robert Raikes began his work, few of the children gathering in his schools could read. The Horn-book was the poor substitute in old England for the New England Primer across the Atlantic. It consisted of "a single page upon which the alphabet and a few

[1] Gulick, p. 154 (1897). For details of Sunday-school progress on the continent of Europe, see "The Day, the Book, and the Teacher," by E. Paxton Hood, Chap. XI.

short words were printed.[1] This was pasted upon a small piece of board with a handle, and the printed matter was covered with transparent horn, so that the fingers of the young reader, probably seldom very clean, should not obliterate the letters." It was no doubt because education was in so backward a condition in England that the catechism, which relied chiefly on the memory, was so generally used. As we have seen, it was necessary for the Sunday-school to do what the day-school had failed to do. A scholar in the early part of the century recalls how "we had long, narrow trays, filled with sand, in which with our forefingers we used to trace the letters of the alphabet. Then came what were called 'battledores,' thin pieces of wood, having printed on each side words of two or three syllables. The next stage was a spelling-book, and so on to catechisms and long passages of Scripture and hymns, to be learned during the week and repeated to the teacher on Sunday."[2] "After morning church," says one of the scholars, "Mr. Raikes used to hear us all say the Collect for the day, and whoever said it best had a penny. In school the Bible and the catechism were taught us." Faith in a catechism was very general, and still remains so, although the entirely satisfactory catechism is

[1] E. P. Hood, p. 9.

[2] "Northamptonshire Sunday-schools," p. 15.

yet an unfulfilled prophecy. Others besides Dr. J. A. Broadus have found an extremely difficult task "to make questions and answers about the existence and attributes of the Divine Being that shall be intelligible to children," and yet few will be disposed to quarrel with the enthusiasm of Robert Louis Stevenson when he writes that "the Shorter Catechism opens with the best and shortest and completest sermon ever written upon man's chief end." At the first public meeting of the Sunday-school Union in London, in 1812, it was reported that thirty-eight thousand copies of a catechism in verse, entitled "Milk for Babes," had been printed; and in the records of an old Baptist church in Yorkshire, under date October 15, 1822, I find that the church "thought it proper that school children be taught to get catechisms off." I ask you to notice this because it is plain, I think, that the older Sunday-schools trained the memory far more than we do, and to me it seems one good sign of our times that there is once more a strong and intelligent movement, originating with the editors of the "Biblical World," of Chicago, to formulate a catechism for pupils between the ages of sixteen and twenty-one.[1]

It will have been remarked that under Robert Raikes the Bible was taught in the school. No

[1] "The Outlook," March 2, 1901.

catechism was to be suffered to usurp its place. As early as 1794 he printed a little book of one hundred and twenty pages, about four inches square, "'The Sunday-school Companion,' consisting of Scripture sentences, Disposed in such Order as will quickly ground young learners in the Fundamental Doctrines of our most Holy Religion, and at the same time Lead Them Pleasantly On from Simple and Easy to Compound and Difficult Words." The Bible was to be the text-book in the class. Among the first publications of the Sunday-school Union we find[1] "A Select List of Scriptures, designed as a Guide to teachers for a course of reading in Sunday-schools." In 1818 the union prepared a "Reading book consisting of extracts from the Sacred Scriptures." And these publications were only temporary in the minds of the managers of the union. "The object desired and sought after was placing in the hands of all the scholars who could read the Bible, a complete copy of the word of God." This it was, you remember, which made the Sunday-school enterprise the parent of the Bible Society. That society, in its turn, recognized its obligation to the Sunday-school Union when, in 1840, after repeated applications, it complied with the request of the committee for a cheap Bible. The object

[1] Watson, pp. 44, 45.

of this concession was that, "read under the direction of pious teachers, the Scriptures should be studied . . . and their truths impressed upon the memory." [1] The reduction in the price of Bibles created such a demand that, after expending £14,000, the Bible Society found it necessary in self-defense to stop the supply. This was sixty years ago. To-day the Bible is probably the cheapest book which issues from the press.

The Bible continued to be used in the classes of English Sunday-schools certainly through the first two-thirds of the nineteenth century. Probably it is still used in very many of them. For a glimpse of the teaching as late as 1858 in a village in one of the midland counties, I am indebted to my friend, Rev. Dr. Trotter, president of Acadia College, Nova Scotia. He writes:

> In the Sunday-school of the General Baptist Church, at Thurkeston, Leicestershire, England, where I attended as a boy from 1858 to 1867, the exercises were ordinarily about as follows: School was opened with singing and prayer, the exercises being conducted by humble men, of only the slightest education, who were either farm laborers or petty tradesfolk. The hymns used were of a very doleful sort, a very familiar one being:
>
> "And am I born to die,
> To lay this body down,
> And must my trembling spirit fly
> Into a world unknown?"

[1] Watson, p. 48.

Only at the Sunday-school anniversary, when special services were arranged, were the brighter hymns, which were then coming somewhat into use in other places, employed. The first of these which I can recall, and which was handed out in printed form on single sheets, was the hymn,

> "There is a better world, they say,
> Oh, so bright!"

I can never forget the delight with which this hymn thrilled me as a little fellow of seven or eight.

The prayers were very hackneyed, so much so that as regards fixity of expression we got the advantage of a liturgy without, however, its color and music. Nevertheless, the ideas so often repeated were substantially correct ideas, and they glowed with real earnestness.

After the opening exercises we were dismissed to classes. So far as my own experience goes, and I think it represents what prevailed in the school, the half-hour spent in class was spent entirely in the reading of the Scriptures. There was no international series of lessons in those times, nor was there any systematic direction whatever of the work in the classes. One class read in one part of the Bible, another in another part. Often the choice of the portion was made after the class had assembled, the scholars having as much to do in deciding the point as the teacher. Having fixed upon the portion, we read by turn till the half-hour was up. I cannot recall that there was any effort at explanation. By the reading process, however, we got a certain surface familiarity with large portions of the Bible. At the close of the half-hour the superintendent called out "time to dismiss," the younger children were then gathered together for singing and to be talked to by somebody, while the older scholars retired to a large vestry, round the walls of which were folding desks, to spend half an hour writing in copy books, this being the only opportunity

some of the poorer children had of learning to write at all. After this the entire school was gathered together for closing exercises, which always included a few words about the need of being born again, or the dying of Jesus as the ground of forgiveness, or something vital. It was a crude jumble of exercises, but I can trace the views I hold and the experiences through which God's grace has led me to certain beginnings of thought and feeling and resolve in the Sunday-school of that dear village far away.

The Sunday-school Union of London, first by preparing a list of reading lessons for the use of classes and then by publishing monthly "notes" as a guide to teachers in their private study of the lesson for the day, had prepared the way for a still wider and more important combination. It was in Chicago that, under Dr. J. H. Vincent, the first successful effort was made to promote uniformity in Bible study in all the Protestant schools of the city. "So successful was this experiment at uniformity in Chicago that the schools from other towns and cities soon began to use these lessons also. Before the international plan was agreed upon it is believed that there were three millions of people engaged in studying the lessons issued from Chicago. Then the question arose, 'Why not extend this method of studying the Scriptures throughout the United States and so make it national?' The indications were that that could easily be done. 'But why not strike out boldly and go still further?' it was asked. 'Why not make it international?

Why may there not be a common study of the Bible for the world?'"[1] The question of adopting a plan of united Bible study was debated at a National Sunday-school Convention held in 1872 in Indianapolis. When the debate was closed and the chairman put the question to the vote, with the exception of ten persons, the great throng arose to vote in favor of the proposal, and as by a common impulse the convention broke into the doxology in which all English-speaking people give voice to religious joy,

"Praise God from whom all blessings flow."

Next day the committee which had the matter in charge was instructed to select "A course of lessons for a series of years not exceeding seven, which shall, as far as they may decide possible, embrace a general study of the Bible."[2] An English religious magazine, in describing what is justly called "a great literary syndicate," thus sketches the work which has now for so many years been faithfully carried on by the staff of "The International Sunday-school Lesson Series":

The vast dimensions to which it has attained is a striking evidence of the evangelical power of Christianity. Little more than thirty-five years since there was no thought of simultaneous study in our Sunday-schools; nowadays twenty million teachers and pupils are week after week

[1] "Report of the World's Convention," etc., 1889, p. 117.

[2] "The Sunday Magazine," 1901.

studying the same lesson. The central editorial staff of this great organization is the American Lesson Committee, which held its last meeting in New York on April 17, 1901. It has, however, an auxiliary body of associates known as the British section, to which its work is submitted for amendment and concurrence. As the members of this section are divided between England, Australia, and India, it will be seen that the entire editorial organization covers three continents. America, however, exerts the dominant influence, for the initiative rests with the American committee and the movement had its birth in Chicago.

Generally the sessions are held in the parlor of a hotel. The full number on the committee roll is fifteen. The present American Lesson Committee was appointed in 1896 and proceeded to the preparation of lessons for 1900–1905. The theme chosen was the life of Christ and of the great prophets, leaders, and apostles. At the first meeting the scheme for this particular study is settled and an abstract of the proceedings is sent to each member of the British section—six in England, one in Australia, and one in India. When the criticism on the abstract comes back, the committee meets again, and if the scheme is approved by the corresponding members a detailed outline of the lessons for five years is arranged. The first question with regard to each lesson is, "From what book and chapter shall it be taken?" The selection must be above denominational or controversial issues, and it must be within the mental grasp of every boy or girl, and at least a portion of the lesson and the golden text must hold the attention of the toddlers in the primary classes.

Then the passage which is the gem of the lesson is selected for special treatment. Almost as difficult a task as the choice of golden texts, to which much thought is devoted, is the giving of appropriate names to the various lessons.

When the lessons for the quarter have been chosen the selections are subjected to a critical examination regarding their relation to the lessons of the whole year. In the same manner the completion of the selections for a year is the signal for a patient re-examination of every lesson, with special reference to the manner in which the year's series fits into the plan for the period and for the entire six years embraced in the work of the committee. Then the lessons thus definitely selected by the American Committee are printed on strong paper, and copies are forwarded to the British section for final emendation. After this the year's lessons are sent round to the great publishing houses, which print them as leaflets, and hundreds of commentators set to work to assist in elucidating them.

The committee has not failed to represent with fairness the great denominations of Protestant Christendom, and, although Bishop Vincent and Mr. B. F. Jacobs, who were foremost in formulating the lessons, remain to-day almost alone of the leaders at the memorable Indianapolis Convention, yet the spirit of the great enterprise is practically unchanged. Its success was no doubt due to a happy mingling of sentiment and common sense. The imagination of multitudes of Christian people, always eager for union, was fascinated by the idea of the great army of Sunday-schools engaged simultaneously in the study of the same portion of the Bible. And the sturdy denominational feeling was satisfied that no personal convictions were to be offended by a plan which left

it to the separate churches to issue their own lesson notes.

Brought together (such is the testimony of Dr. Warren Randolph, speaking in the retrospect of twenty-seven years of active work on the International Lesson Committee), as we have been from many different denominations, we have found no difficulty in regard to a common ground upon which to stand in turning every leaf of the Bible. There is not a chapter or verse from Genesis to Revelation which has been passed by because of differences of opinion. With different interpretations we have had nothing whatever to do. All that has been left to the teachers and expositors of the different schools and different denominations.[1]

During the remaining years of the century the International Lessons held the field. As time passed on, with a more intelligent study of the Bible there came to be grave questionings on the part of many whether too much had not been surrendered to the mere sentiment of uniformity. At the result of these questionings we shall glance later on. Our study thus far must certainly have convinced us that the International Lesson course has rendered an incalculable service to the cause of intelligent Bible study.

And to the whole work of the Sunday-school in its renewed vigor we owe it, as much as to any one cause, that the religious life of the Old and New World has been roused and lifted. Such dark

[1] "World's Convention," etc., 1889, p. 120.

forebodings as the century opened with were certainly uncalled for when it closed. "The universal inactivity of all religions," which Horace Walpole noted in England in 1780 as a symptom of degeneration; the "daily complaints of the irreligion and depravity of the age, which in 1802 a reviewer of Doctor Blair's sermons feared to be 'not louder than just'"; the low ebb of Bible study and Bible teaching in America at the beginning of the nineteenth century, to which we have already alluded, all these had ceased to be characteristic of that century long before it reached its last year. When Canon Farrar affirms that it is no exaggeration at all to say that through the organization commenced by the simple citizen of Gloucester hundreds of thousands of Christ's little ones have been reached and have been influenced for their temporal and eternal good, he says only what the history of the Sunday-schools of the nineteenth century proves to be even less than the whole truth. Not the children alone, but the entire life of the people at large, has been lifted into a brighter light and into a purer and sweeter atmosphere by the work which Robert Raikes commenced when, in answer to the inward voice, "Can nothing be done?" he responded bravely, "Try."

IV

THE MINISTER AND THE YOUNG PEOPLE OF THE CONGREGATION

Nothing should take the place of parental obligation. The minister as the friend of the young people. Three stages in the development of the young. The minister as the pastor of the young people. Influence of infant baptism. Pastoral visitation. Organizing the young people for Christian life and work. The minister as a preacher to the young. Children's services. The sermon or address.

IV

THE MINISTER AND THE YOUNG PEOPLE OF THE CONGREGATION

As there is nothing which should lessen parental responsibility, so there is nothing which should take the place of parental obligation. The school and the church miss their mark when they do this. The claims alike of God and of the commonwealth demand that the father and the mother recognize that on them, in the first instance, does it rest to train their child in the duties of life. "There can be no question,"[1] says Edersheim, "that according to the law of Moses, the early education of a child devolved upon the father; of course always bearing in mind that his first training would be the mother's." It is from the home that we catch the earliest notes of instruction. From the lifted tent-flap or from the latticed window come these sounds: "And ye shall teach these my words to your children, speaking of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, when thou liest down and when thou risest up."[2]

Abraham was priest as well as father in his

[1] "Sketches," etc., p. 129. [2] Deut. 11 : 19.

household. No after change, no partition of offices, can affect the conclusion to which we are brought by this fact. Even the initiatory rite of the Jews belonged to the parents more than to the priest. It was they who presented the child. It was they who made the offerings. Bushnell, in dealing with infant baptism, says:

> According to the more ancient view nothing depends upon the priest or minister save that he execute the rite in due form. . . Everything depends upon the organic law of character pertaining between the parent and the child, the church and the child, thus upon duty and holy living and gracious example.[1]

At the very outset, then, let us understand clearly that the parent precedes the minister, the family the church, and the home the school. The founder of Sunday-schools, Robert Raikes, evidently loved his great enterprise none the less because he loved his own home circle first, for he writes to an old correspondent in the pleasantly formal fashion of his century: "I must now tell you that I am blessed with six excellent girls and two lovely boys. My eldest boy was born the very day that I made public to the world the scheme of Sunday-schools, in my paper of November 3, 1783."

And yet home teaching is not enough. The

[1] "Christian Nurture," p. 46.

parents who can and who will give Bible instruction to their children are few in number. In the majority of cases the most that we can hope for is parental example, and the home is fortunate when even that is what it should be. In no country in the world does the home stand for more than it does in Germany, and nowhere, I suppose, does the State do more in the way of religious education in the public schools; yet it was the lack of intelligent Bible study that led an American traveler in that country to start a Sunday-school in Berlin which has met with such favor that now "all clergymen who are not rationalists have Sunday-schools." [1]

So it comes about that we need to ask ourselves what the church owes to the children; and since the minister is to so large an extent the representative of the church our theme in this chapter is his relation to them as friend, pastor, and preacher.

And, first, let us look on the minister as the friend of the young people in his congregation. First, I say, because it is first. He will influence them little as pastor or preacher unless as their friend he has already won their hearts. Knowledge comes by way of the affections; and it is John, "the disciple whom Jesus loved," who looking through the sheen of the morning, recognizes,

[1] Trumbull, p. 135.

earlier than Peter or the other disciples, the Master standing on the lake shore, and says in raptured tones, "It is the Lord."

As I think of it now, in the sunny haze of many pastoral reminiscences, no relation other than that of kindred, seems more beautiful than this which grows up between the minister and the children of his parish. It was a far cry from the London lodging to the Irish parsonage; but to Oliver Goldsmith the portrait of his father, the good minister, had lost none of its vivid color as memory recalled it; and so he wrote:

> E'en children followed with endearing wile
> And pluck'd his gown to share the good man's smile.
> His ready smile a parent's warmth express'd,
> Their welfare pleased him, and their cares distressed.
> To them his heart, his love, his griefs were given,
> But all his serious thoughts had rest in heaven.

A pastor writing of his forty years'[1] experience in one church says:

> How it began I forget, but it came to pass that for years at the close of each morning's service, children from four to ten years of age, came up into the pulpit and kissed the pastor. That custom was very beautiful. It made the pulpit look like a bouquet of fragrant, animated flowers. He will never forget it, and believes that they will remember it in all after years. On one occasion an eminent minister, in exchange, occupied the pastor's place, and our little ones,

[1] Baldwin, p. 50.

as was their habit, went up into the pulpit to salute him; but he started back in amazement, and exclaimed: "Whose young ones are these?" At which greeting they retired in shamefaced disorder. No man can do the full work of the ministry without love for, and perpetual interest in, children.

Let the minister, therefore, begin as early as possible to win the affection of the children in his congregation. Let the child unconsciously associate him with

The sweet presence of a good diffused.[1]

And let those childish memories be connected with religion. One purpose of the whole Jewish ritual, of the private and united prayers of the family, of the various domestic rites, of the weekly Sabbaths and the stated festivals, was just this: "From the moment a child was at all capable of being instructed,—still more of his taking any part in the services,—the impression would deepen day by day."[2]

The Jews, so says Philo, "were from their swaddling clothes, even before being taught either the sacred laws or the unwritten customs, trained by their parents, teachers, and instructors to recognize God as Father and as the Maker of the world."[3]

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[1] George Eliot.

[2] Edersheim, "Sketches," etc., p. 108. [3] *Ibid.*, p. 110.

It is not for us to speculate on how much of a religious nature the soul coming from afar brings with it, nor how profound a truth Mrs. Browning expresses when she says:

> I have not so far left the coasts of life
> To travel inland, that I cannot hear
> That murmur of the outer Infinite
> Which unweaned babies smile at in their sleep,
> When wondered at for smiling.[1]

Enough if the pastor comes to be associated lovingly in the impressions of this young life, and to become an influence for good, growing with its growth and strengthening with its strength. The fact that the minister assumes no priestly attitude toward the child will make the early impression all the purer, by importing into it no element that is tinctured by pride or assumption. "I have refused authority," said Henry Ward Beecher, "that I might have influence, which is a great deal better."

The one essential, so it seems to me, to this tender and beautiful influence is that on his part the minister preserve fresh the child's heart. Some will remember how Mr. Beecher himself kept this, and how as he left Plymouth Church for the last time it was with his arms about two little street boys who had wandered in, after the service was

[1] "Aurora Leigh."

over, when the congregation had dispersed, and while the organist was playing to the tired preacher the tunes he loved the best. Somehow there comes unbidden to our minds the words of the olden story, as applicable to the man for whom the life of storm and stress was now almost over: "And his flesh came again like unto the flesh of a little child, and he was clean." And some will remember too, how on his death-bed Thomas Guthrie, the children's friend, begged that they would sing to him "a bairn's hymn." The child-heart craved its own nourishment. I pray my readers to preserve it also. Apart from the joy which it will bring into all your lives, and the relief which it will bring into all your ministry, it will be of vast importance in your influence on the children in the congregation if its minister can to the end say with Wordsworth:

My heart leaps up when I behold
A rainbow in the sky;
So was it when my life began,
So is it now I am a man,
So be it when I shall grow old,
Or let me die!
The child is father to the man,
And I could wish my days to be
Bound each to each by natural piety.

His affection for the young people and his desire to do them good, will lead the minister to study them. He will soon discover that the two daugh-

ters of the horse-leech,[1] "crying, give, give," have many brothers and sisters. A gentleman found a little boy, barefooted and in rags, on his doorstep one morning. "And what do you want, little one?" he inquired; and the boy looking himself over with a rapid glance, answered, "Everything." Every healthy child wants everything; and however long he lives or however much he gathers, he will not get beyond the noble discontent which Paul expressed when he said, "Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect."

To the development of what we may for the moment call "the young person," there have been three distinct stages. By all means let us remember this in our treatment of the various steps of that young person's growth. First, imagination, when the child, like Robert Louis Stevenson walking the Edinburgh street, is forever "supposing." The little child is in this stage; and if one means to engage his attention he may tell a story. To this succeeds memory, and now a personal reminiscence will interest. Then comes, third, reflection, and with it powers of reasoning, which will fasten upon a thought if attractively put. Imagination, and then memory, and then reflection—this, roughly speaking (and with no great care for the modern disposition to study child-life in strata),

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[1] Prov. 30 : 15.

this seems to be the order of the growing intelligence. To recall these points when one conducts the public service and aims to catch the attention of the younger element in the congregation, will be good; but better still will it be never to forget it. It will open to us the avenue of approach to the hearts of the children, of the boys or girls, and of the young people.

In the second place, we must consider the minister as the pastor of the young people in his congregation.

[The early Jewish rites brought each child in the theocracy into close relations to the priest. The churches which observe infant baptism give, perhaps, an advantage of the same kind to their minister. It may be viewed as a sacrament, or it may be looked at only as a simple form of dedication, but in any case the pastor, by virtue of this baptismal service, comes into sympathetic connection with the child. He has some ground for appeal, although in most cases the ground may not be taken with any pretense of sacerdotal authority.

The writer is strongly disposed to believe that a consecration service for infants should be encouraged among us, with the assent of the parents, and not so much as a duty but as a privilege. There seems to be authority for it in the practice of some Baptist churches: for instance, the First Baptist Church, Hartford, Ct.; Dr. John Clifford's, London; and Emmanuel Baptist Church, New York City, Samuel Alman, pastor, 1890. In one church in New York the pastor for many years of his ministry has "urged it as a duty upon Christian parents to bring their children as soon as possible to the house of God and there publicly conse-

crate and name them with prayer and thanksgiving." To every family whose child is thus dedicated, is given a certificate of consecration, and the pastor testifies that "many blessings have followed this religious ceremony." Among the announcements made in the weekly "Bulletin" of the Westbourne Park Baptist Church, London, of which Dr. John Clifford is the minister, I find the following: "The next baptism will take place on Wednesday evening, January 19th, and the next dedication service of children to God our Father will be held on Sunday morning, January 23rd."]

One of our first duties as ministers is to include the children of the families among those who have the benefit of pastoral visitation. We need to learn not only their Christian names, but also the familiar and endearing epithets which they may bear at home. To remember the names of the sons of Levi or how Amram stood related to Uzziel can be of no practical service to us which is at all comparable with the knowledge that Mary is two years older than Frank and two years younger than Kate.

Let us study the tastes of the children. There are many instances on record of pastoral popularity when this was done more literally than is here intended. The minister's pockets have prepared the way for the minister's precepts. I remember riding one summer afternoon with a French *curé*, who was returning to his parish from the weekly market, and how heartily he was welcomed as he

paused at one farm after another to drop his simple purchases,—a book for Jacques, a toy for Marie, a doll for Babette,—and I think that I learned then and there one of my earliest lessons in pastoral theology. "Talk with the children," said Wesley to his preachers, "every time you see any at home."[1] But I mean more, far more, than this. Let us find the bent of each young mind. We may help to develop the intellectual and moral growth of a hundred lives. The normal school, the college, the ministry may witness, by and by, to the fruitage of our intelligent study of these opening years.

I would go further. When we have won their love and gained their respect for our words we may now and then form voluntary classes for instruction from our lips in religious truth. In occasional vacations, winter and spring and summer, we can set apart one or two hours and meet those who are free from the work of the public school. We can talk to them directly and simply upon the chief things. Perhaps we may set them learning texts so as to have something with which to break the ice at the beginning of the hour.[2] But we must shun all formality, and, as we love the class, keep clear of all assumption of the pedagogue.

[1] Tyerman's "Life of Wesley," 3 : 23.

[2] "Treasure Texts for Youthful Memories," Barton. The Pilgrim Press, Chicago.

The purely voluntary character of the gathering will be helped if the children are met alone, without any older persons (not even their parents) being present. A little book given to each as a memorial of these occasional classes will become an heirloom. This was the praiseworthy practice of the Puritan leader, Cotton Mather. He brought his young people into religious association, and added to Janeway's "Token for Children"—then first published in Boston—a little book of his own, which, however, hardly tempts us by its title, "Some examples of children in whom the fear of God was remarkably budding before they died in several parts of New England."[1] But a glance at the old-fashioned Sunday-school library may make us less censorious when we reflect how long "the anæmic child continued to be a great part of spiritual literature." The pious but unhealthy little boy who died early, also died out very slowly from our books for children.

I am not aware that among the experts in statistics, often too much in evidence in our churches, any one has gathered the figures in reference to the causes which lead to conversion. The general impression that preaching is the most prolific source is probably erroneous. The influence and instruction of a good Sunday-school teacher is

[1] "Life," p. 221; "Old Chester Tales," p. 93.

likely to be more productive of positive results than the average sermon. But if I were asked to what can be traced the largest number of conversions which have been permanent and powerful, I think that without much hesitation I should point to pastoral influence. For personal surrender and consecration in a natural and simple way, without the unhealthful influences of heated rooms, flaring lamps, exciting hymns, and sensational appeals, the true minister will work all the time.

The true pastor will refuse to reckon an apprenticeship to sin essential to the service of God. The time has passed, I hope, in which the household of faith numbered no children among its family. We have come to believe heartily in early folding. It is preferable to Cotton Mather's ideal of early dying. His buds all fell short of flowers, ours blossom. The story may be recalled —which has been told under so many guises that there is probably some truth in it—of the good old Scottish elder who, being deeply concerned because his pastor persistently refused to allow children to be admitted to church-fellowship, invited him to his house. After tea the elder took the pastor out to see his large flock of sheep put into the fold. Taking his stand at the entrance to the sheepfold, the elder allowed the sheep to enter, but as the little lambs came up he roughly pushed them back with a heavy stick. At this unnatural

treatment the pastor became very indignant and exclaimed: "What are you doing to the lambs? They need the shelter far more than the sheep!" "Just what you are doing to the children of the church," was the prompt reply. Upon the churches generally as well as upon that particular pastor this lesson has had its due effect. We are prepared as never before to bring the children to the good Shepherd and find shelter for them in his arms.

Gradually too, although the growth of this conviction is slow, we are coming to see that each stage in our human life has to be treated according to its own capacity. Nothing seems more intolerable than the religious prodigy. The old head upon young shoulders is an abortion. Boys, as Henry Drummond puts it, are to be religious as boys and not as old maids.[1] In religion as in other matters it has been found true that for precocity "some great price is always demanded, sooner or later."[2] A child with a man's appetite, a lad of twelve with the erudition of Grotius, a cyclopædic mind in a twenty years old student, have no attraction for a sane judgment. It is right that your Admirable Crichtons should die young.

If the pastor is wise he will encourage only a healthful and natural growth in the religious life of

[1] H. Drummond, "Life," p. 344.
[2] "Life of Margaret Fuller Ossoli," p. 374.

his young people. It would be hard to calculate the harm that has been done to children by teaching them to repeat formulas in their prayer meetings which, however much they mean to their elders, are on their lips absurd in their unreality. By and by they may have significance enough, but to foist on the springtime the heats of summer and the hurricanes of the fall is to do a wrong to the true order of nature. How often one has heard that tremendous word "consecration"—"I wish to consecrate myself"—from a young girl scarcely yet in her teens, and glibly ready with phrases for which she really cared less than she did for the ribbon on her hat. With all our hearts we join with Horace Bushnell in his protest against the

> Early wasting of impressions and experiences and a creeping in of untruth whilst the power vanishes and the forms of speech remain. For both the most delicate and the most solemn experiences become, after this method, objects of continual reflection and conversation under which, at last, solemn earnestness as well as all delicacy is destroyed, and there remains either a continual self-deception, with the semblance of the reality of godliness, or a gnawing consciousness of an increasing untruthfulness and of an inner unfruitfulness beneath a mass of phrases.[1]

To promote a healthful growth—a child's faith for the child, a boy's for the boy, a young man's

[1] "Christian Nurture," p. 382.

for the young man—will be the aim of the pastor. It may indeed be easier for him to let the usual superficial and unreal methods remain undisturbed, just as it may also be easier to preach moral essays or to discuss sociological problems or to analyze the poets in his sermons rather than Sunday after Sunday to preach the truths which are able to make men wise unto salvation. But if the preacher is a good minister of Jesus Christ he will not let his preaching and his pastoral work run on in easy grooves and then every two or three years, calling on his people to confess their unfaithfulness and get up a revival, send for an evangelist and expect to do with his poor dynamite what the minister himself should have been doing all the time with the divine power of Christian nurture and with the divine provision of faithful preaching.

Has not a serious wrong been done to many a young person brought into the church, by the neglect of all after training? The greatest anxiety has been shown to get him into the Christian fellowship, and the greatest joy has been expressed when once he was fairly within the gates; but what after that? The religion even of "highly educated young persons," it has been said, "consists of miscellaneous notions picked up from formal attendance on the public worship, supplemented by a few promiscuous remarks heard in the home circle, and colored by the superficial

wash of fictitious literature."[1] Let us set ourselves to remedy this. The pastor should have training classes for young converts, and instruct them familiarly in the doctrines and practices, the history and present condition, of the church of which they are members, as well as of the yet broader church of which it, in its turn, forms only a part.

Do we not also need to revise what I may call the church suffrage? Many churches, it is currently reported, are unduly controlled by the young people. Irresponsible, swayed by feelings or prejudices, contributing little or nothing to the income of the society, yet, by virtue of their numbers alone, they can decide the choice of a pastor or precipitate his resignation, launch the church on the troubled sea of debt on the one hand, or on the other hinder necessary projects of extension—although to do them justice they are apt to be expansionists of the most generous kind. The remedy for this is some kind of manhood suffrage, some clause in the church charter which limits the power to vote to what, at least presumably, is an age of discretion. It seems a misfortune that when young boys or girls join a church, oftener than not, they come at a bound into all the rights and privileges which the church can offer.

These are matters of detail; and yet they are

[1] S. R. Pattison, paper at Baptist Union of Great Britain and Ireland, 1869, p. 7.

not unimportant. Upon them all the pastor will have to form and express an opinion. In our church life, as much as anywhere else, is it true that while life is made up of trifles, life itself is no trifle.

I have set a high value upon pastoral example in its unconscious influence on the hearts and minds and consciences of the younger people in the parish. It is almost impossible to exaggerate that influence. The minister who remains many years in one charge will enjoy its fruits, as the transient birds of passage—the parochial tramps —cannot. Their friend and counsellor in infancy, childhood, and youth, he will seem to those who grow up under his care to be himself a part of the established order of things. To adopt the fine words of an Oxford student,[1] writing in praise of his ancient college, and to apply them to the parish, "Here, if anywhere, the minister may hope to hear the still voice of truth, to penetrate through the little transitory questions of the hour to the realities which abide while the generations come and go." If he has a delicate sense of honor, if he is high-minded and disinterested, if he is, to the young people, incarnate truth and justice and love, then the hour will never come when the influences which he exerts will cease. On the other hand,

[1] Professor Frazer, Oxford, 1899.

any meanness or inconsistency will be quickly marked, and not he but the very cause of righteousness itself may have to suffer for it. Bernard Gilpin, the apostle of the North, in the sixteenth century, was only a boy when to his father's hall came for bed and board one evening, a preaching friar. The sermon of the next day was discounted in advance by the intoxication of the supper table; and when the friar in his discourse waxed eloquent in exposing the sins of the flesh, the boy plucked his father's sleeve and asked him how the man dared condemn excesses when he himself had been taken to bed drunk the night before. We have no quicker, and I had almost said no fairer, critics of conduct than the young people in our congregation. Certainly there are none who with such instinctive appreciation will recognize a high ideal of manly virtue, and themselves be swayed and molded by it. To be their minister seems to me an incalculable privilege. In the early French revolution the schoolboys of Bourges formed themselves into a company, wore their uniform, learned their exercises and marching through the streets of the city unfurled a banner bearing this inscription, "*Tremblez, tyrans, nous grandirons!*" "Tremble, tyrants, we shall grow." To muster and marshall the ranks of growing life is the pastor's office, and I know of none that is more inspiring. The church of to-morrow marches there.

This mention of a band of disciplined volunteers leads me to urge that we should be judicious in organizing the young people in our congregation. Let us not add to the already exhausting labors of the alphabet by starting new societies calling for new arrangements of letters to set forth their aims. As a rule, it seems to me that, just as the poorer the man the more numerous his family, so the smaller the church the larger is likely to be the number of petty organizations—each of course with its title and its badge—which are struggling for an existence, when, oftener than not, they had better cease. The inscription on an English tombstone, "Methuselah Coney, aged two weeks," involuntarily occurs to me when I run my eye over the list of these high-sounding enterprises. "Strengthen the things that remain" rather than call another piece of inflated feebleness into being. In the Church, as in the State, what we need is not fresh laws, but rather that what we already have be fairly administered. And here it may not be out of place to utter a word of caution against the peril of inflicting on young and ignorant minds conditions that can for the present mean nothing to them. With Mr. Beecher I am inclined to say:

> I am opposed, heartily opposed, to the imposition that I see practised on children by attempting to make them, at nine, ten, eleven, or twelve years old, do things and feel things that belong to adult life and do not belong to chil-

dren. The idea that you can organize them and bring them to pledges, and get them to make promises and put them on platforms that are pre-eminently out of their reach, it seems to me, is absolutely absurd.[1]

As a practical conclusion to what has been said about the relation of the pastor to the young people who have been brought into his church, I would urge that he keep in friendly and confidential touch with them. Once a year let him meet all who have been added to the church in each separate year and so give to them a distinct interest in one another. Let the meeting be at the same time social and devotional in its character. Let the attendance be limited to those who have been mentioned and to the deacons or elders of the church. Get each one to speak, however briefly. Have light refreshments provided and bright music. Let the minister's own address, if he makes one, be earnest and faithful. Each such gathering can be utilized as a power for putting new life into all the church and for pushing out on aggressive lines of Christian work.

I may also recommend that each pastor have in the vestibule of his church a pastor's letter-box, of which he alone holds the key, and that he invite the young people (of course not by any means only them) to write to him on any questions of faith and practice calling for light. But while

[1] "Yale Lectures," II., 185.

these simple methods are referred to, I must, in justice to my present purpose, add that the particular way in which this pastoral influence and this friendly touch are obtained and kept up seems to me altogether secondary. Every man must devise his own. What suits one cannot possibly suit all. The country church is not to be handled as the city church is. The less cultured are not responsive to methods which succeed with the more refined. Of the true pastor, as of him whose servant he is, we may dare to say that

> The old order changeth, yielding place to new,
> And God fulfills himself in many ways.

We have now spoken of the minister as the friend of the young people in his congregation and as their pastor. It remains for me to deal with a subject of great interest alike to him and to them, I mean the minister as preacher.

Hitherto we have been thinking chiefly of how the child, the boy, the girl, the young life in the parish, look to the minister. But let us remember that there are two sides to everything. Have we ever considered the reverse of this and asked ourselves how the minister—the preacher let us say for our present purpose—looks to the child? "Your baby doesn't disturb me," said a minister who was vociferating in his sermon to a mother who was leaving the church with a crying infant.

"That isn't it, sir," she replied, "you disturb my baby." When Tennyson wrote his "Northern Farmer" we learned, almost it seemed as a revelation, what the bucolic mind held as to the parson:

"An' I hallus comed to's choorch afoor my Sally wur dead
An' eerd un a bummin awaay loike a buzzard clock ower my ye'ed,
An' I niver knaw'd, but I thowt a 'ad summat to saay,
An' I thowt a said what a owt to 'a said, an' I comed awaay."

In the same way one cannot help hoping that the child's laureate will some day interpret for us the wide-open eyes and calmly wondering look with which the first sermon is received. The young preacher in a country congregation who dared to hold on with his sermon half an hour after milking time was very properly informed by the farmer's wife that, if only he had the feelings of a cow, under these trying circumstances, he would know better when to stop. The minister, if he has kept fresh and natural the child's heart, will need no such reproof. He will hear his own voice with the child's ear and measure his own address by the limited rule of the child's power of attention.

At a very early age children should be brought to church. To the church first; to the school second. If it comes to be a question whether the boy or girl should go to the morning service or to the school, I should answer without any hesita-

tion, to the service. The habit of attending public worship cannot too soon be begun. The neglect of this, coupled with the unfortunate hour at which many of our Sunday-schools meet,—noon,—has done much to break the connection between the young people and the church, and to abolish that fine old institution, the family pew. The congregation dispersing at twelve o'clock meets the children coming to school. And it may very well be that the absence of so large a proportion of our population from church can be traced to this fact. When the time came for the boy to leave his class, having in his own estimation grown too old to go any longer to school, there was no other alternative to which he had been accustomed than to go nowhere. We must work for the revival of the family pew, that spectacle of solid and prosperous devotion which marks the British as distinguished from the American congregation. In the case of very young children, the minister, if he is wise, will invite parents to bring them, and the mother, if she is wise, will resist the temptation to take the baby to the very front pew, so as to disturb the service to the utmost when the inevitable cry comes. She will be content for the time to be rather a doorkeeper in the house of the Lord. When children are brought to the service, let as much liberty as possible be given to them. I hope it is unnecessary for me to say that under no cir-

cumstances should the child be kept awake. If it sleeps it will do well for itself, and better perhaps for all the rest of the congregation. Let not the minister allow himself to be put out by reason of any inattention on the part of the children. They listen quite as much, in proportion, as do their elders, but they have not yet learned how behind a mask of polite toleration to conceal a mind which is a thousand miles away. Think how little there is in the ordinary congregational service to interest a boy. How little part he can take in it. I believe that Mr. Beecher is right when he says:

> In the Episcopal and the Roman Catholic churches there is something for children. In that regard these churches are far beyond us. A child can follow the service in the book, can make responses, can read, can sing—and there is very much of song service in the Episcopal Church. In ours how little is there which is fitted to the thought of the children.[1]

Under the Puritan rule in New England the ordinary boy seems to have been an object of almost perpetual reprobation. It was the settled conviction of the minister that foolishness was bound up in the heart of the child, and that with him and the tithing man did it rest to expel the foolishness and correct the child. The boys were seated on the pulpit stairs, and what terrors were not conveyed to them by the preacher's word were

[1] "Yale Lectures," 2, 190.

carried to them by the other functionary's rod. Above them stretched the gallery with its wider spaces and its greater freedom, but only when they behaved well were they suffered to sit there. They persisted, it seems, in breaking the windows in search of air; and one church book still preserves this resolution on its pages: "The constables are desired to take notis (notice) of the persons that open the windows in the tyme of public worship." [1]

Meanwhile the children, panting and pent in, were not really inattentive. Their minds were active and all their senses quick. We ourselves may remember no word of any sermon ever preached in our hearing in those tender years, but shall we ever forget the peculiar odor of the sanctuary—the church smell; a mixture of mildew and moth and rust, with a fair proportion of last Sunday's atmosphere carried forward to this, in the one place where air seemed to be as changeless and incapable of change as eternity itself? The boy longing, as he afterward confesses, for the sounding board pendent above the pulpit, to fall and put an end to the preacher and his sermon, studying the knots and veins in the woodwork, following the beetle's droning flight, and surrendering himself to the fascinating machinations of the universal spider, is himself the best vindication

[1] Earle, "New England Sabbaths," pp. 59, 61.

of his intelligence. All he asks for is for something to observe, to be interested in, to do. It is our duty to meet this demand.[1]

Having brought the child to the church, let us make him a special object of study. Let us feed him with food convenient for him. Throughout the service there should, I venture to think, be more variety and change. The congregation should rise and sing every hymn, and there should be a responsive reading. Our service is often open to the criticism that when not *triste* it is unmeaning and even frivolous. The reading of the Scriptures should be a matter of very careful study. Encourage the use of Bibles in the pew. It is a good suggestion that "an effort should be made to form this habit in our juvenile assemblies." If necessary during the reading, by a word or two well chosen, explain what to the young and inexperienced may be perplexing.

Never fail to remember the family in your prayer. Are there boys and girls away from home at school? Are there others now, for the first time, engaging in business? Has some social stage been reached? Are there wedding bells in the air, or the cry of the first-born, or has some little grave been dug in the cemetery? Do not fail to make tender reference to all these.

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[1] Lucy Larcom, "A New England Girlhood."

The singing should always attract the young people, and much can be said in favor of the plan, often carried out, I understand, in the north of England, of introducing in some part of the service a children's hymn, to be sung by the children alone, and for which due preparation must be made through the Sunday-school.

Now as to the sermon. If our reliance is placed upon the ordinary discourse, then we should endeavor to have something in it which will attract the children, and arrest the attention of the young people. This was the practice of Philip Doddridge and John Wesley.[1] To revert for a moment to a point on which I have already touched, think how the sermon appears to the younger members of the congregation. Mr. Beecher says that he does not believe that he ever understood a single thing that his father preached about, till he was ten years old.[2] To Lucy Larcom, the preacher "seemed to be trying to explain the Bible by putting it into long words."[3] These are no doubt good samples of the impression which even superior sermons made upon superior children. From these you may descend to the lowest point, where you will find the young British plowboy, who frankly confesses that when the text is announced "I puts my feet up on the seat, and I thinks about naw-

[1] Trumbull, 333. [2] "Yale Lectures," 189.
[3] "A New England Girlhood," 55.

thing at all." This humiliating consummation preachers must determine to ward off by all legitimate means. Even a child can be attracted, if not held, by a descriptive or historical sermon. By all means let us use concrete words, have illustrations, nor be afraid of homely and familiar figures. It is not at all necessary that our young hearer should be able to understand all we say. Probably no one does that. Possibly we do not ourselves. But there should be hooks in every sermon to which the young people can hang an idea; and in every green pasture of the pulpit, daisies, and even dandelions, for the children to pick.

Of late years the plan of preceding the regular sermon with a five-minute address to the children in sermon form has been growing in favor. To it there are only two serious objections, the first, that many excellent preachers have no genius for speaking to children; the second, which is even more weighty, that the sermon proper comes to be looked at as no business of the children's. So one of them remarked after a service of the kind in London, "It seems as if we ought to go when *our* sermon is over." They could have found a sufficiently strong precedent for doing so, since the catechumens, in the early church, used to be dismissed when their part of the public worship was concluded. But if one has the art of addressing children it is probable that this second objec-

tion will not hold. The preacher who can do that is not likely to preach any sermon in which there are no points of interest to the child's mind. Subjects for these five-minute sermons can be found in the volumes into which some of the best of them have been gathered and from the suggestions of one's own reading and observation.

But apart altogether from these efforts there should be now and then, and I think more frequently than has been usual with us, a special service for the children of the Sunday-school. In the times of Robert Raikes and Hannah More the custom was to bring the scholars to the church and seat them by themselves under the care of the teachers. Out of this probably came the Sunday-school gallery, from which I in childhood, looking up at it from the family pew in a country meeting-house, formed my earliest conceptions of the Spanish Inquisition. Especially do I recall the almost fiendish cunning which the teacher by long practice acquired in stinging the face of the sleeping or restless boy by means of the pocket handkerchief used as a whiplash. When this instrument of torture disappeared, to it succeeded, in many cases, the separate service where the scholars were addressed by their teachers, who had (or thought they had) an aptitude for that exercise. Much can be said in favor of this service, and especially when from it the boy or girl passes in

due time to the family seat and the ordinary worship of the congregation.

Where the separate service is held, whether as an occasional or as a regular thing, there should be preparation for it as careful and as thorough as that which is given to any other. For a few moments, therefore, let us consider the service and the sermon.

Let the first aim be to put life into every part of the service. Let the Bible be read, but not too many verses. It should be explained as it is read. The prayer should be simple and earnest and not exposed to the comment of one long-suffering lad, who complained that "the minister had lost his amen and could not find it again." When Thackeray listened to the singing of the charity children in St. Paul's Cathedral he declared, "It is the finest thing in the world, finer than the Declaration of Independence."[1] So it is, and so in its own measure is the singing of the children anywhere. For this very reason let us make the most of it. The tunes of many of our popular hymns seem to be better than the hymns themselves. It must be confessed that they are often halting in their metre, unreal in their emotion, artificial in their sentiment, and in their doctrine shallow or unsound. When a healthy boy sings

[1] "Motley's Letters," 1 : 253.

with vigorous lungs, "I want to be an angel," nothing is further from his thoughts. Even the exquisite child's hymn,

> I think when I read the sweet story of old,
> When Jesus was here among men,

has been criticised for giving the conception of an absent Saviour, whereas he is as near to the children now as when in Judea he held them in his arms and gave to them his blessing. I venture to think that some at least of Doctor Watts's "Divine Songs for Children," although written by a confirmed bachelor, are among the happiest that we have, and certainly I should say that the hymns which we love best in our ordinary service will in many cases be popular with young people.

The sermon or address demands to be considered as our last point.

The importance of knowing how to preach to children and of frequently doing so, needs to be brought home to every minister's heart. "Spend an hour," was Wesley's injunction to his preachers, "spend an hour a week with the children in every large town, whether you like it or not." [1] He may have learned from Count Zinzendorf and the Moravians how useful a practice this was. The count and his fellow-religionists preached directly to the children, and a remarkable revival among

[1] Tyerman, "Life of Wesley," 3 : 23.

them had its rise in a discourse to girls by Zinzendorf himself.[1] Let no one allow himself to think that there is any condescension on his part in doing this. At no other time in all one's ministry will he be treading closer in the footprints of the Master. And never will he be in better company. Mr. Spurgeon declared that for himself he felt that he could preach much more readily to the low and groveling minds of grown-up people than to the purer and sublimer minds of children, who seemed to be nearer heaven, better and simpler.[2] "We call it coming down," said Horace Bushnell, "when we undertake the preaching to children; whereas it is coming up, rather, out of the subterranean hills, darkness, intricacies, and dungeon-like profundities of old, grown-up sin, to speak to the bright daylight creatures of trust and sweet affinities and easy convictions." [3]

It should be enough to recall the men who have made a special practice of the sermon to children to convince any one how honorable a work it is. At the beginning of the Protestant revival of the eighteenth century the leaders were active here. The persuasive tones of Philip Doddridge, the intense devotion of John Wesley, and Richard Cecil's rare eloquence, were pressed into the service. The succession, from that time to this, has never been

[1] Trumbull, p. 106. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 340.
[3] "Life," p. 504.

broken. In the earlier years of our century Alexander Fletcher's annual discourse to children was one of the events of the year in the city of London. John Todd did no better work in all his ministry than when he preached his virile sermons to young people and then gave them to the press. The ministry of Dr. Stephen H. Tyng, in New York, was in no small degree a ministry to the young; and, in Philadelphia, Dr. Richard Newton became for his generation and for ours the model preacher to children. It is remarkable how often the men who have excelled in this enviable art have been men rich in the spirit of St. John: Frederic Denison Maurice, the remembrance of whose face in Lincoln's Inn Chapel is to me a constant benediction; the gentle Andrew Bonar; William Arnot, with a mind like a flower garden, as fragrant as it was bright; and John Cairns, of Berwick, whose

> Strength was as the strength of ten,
> Because his heart was pure.

Space will not allow me to add to the list. Enough if I remind my readers that it contains the names of men from all the churches whom the church universal delights to honor.

To preach to children is not easy. "My children's sermons," said Doctor Newton, "cost me more time and labor than any others I preach." [1]

[1] Trumbull, p. 389.

Nor is it given to every minister to excel here. At a Sunday-school Convention held in Plymouth Church, at the time when Mr. Beecher was in his prime, he was called upon for an address. In the course of his remarks he confessed that he never felt at ease in addressing children. His mission seemed to be to grown-up people, and he was obliged to leave the children to others. Scarcely had he said so when Dr. Stephen H. Tyng entered the church and took his place on the platform. Mr. Beecher went on to give a beautiful picture of the work of a Sunday-school teacher. This part Doctor Tyng heard, and when his turn came he referred in the most flattering terms to the manner in which Mr. Beecher had covered the whole ground. He then went on to say, in the most blissful ignorance of the personal application of his words, that he always preferred in his choice of pastoral work one child to two adults, adding:

"It seems to me that the devil would never ask anything more of a minister than to have him feel that his mission was chiefly to the grown-up members of his congregation, while some one else was to look after the children." The crowded audience shook with subdued mirth while Doctor Tyng, wholly unconscious of the point of his remark, continued, pointing to the door of the church.

"I can see the devil looking in at that door and saying to the minister on this platform: 'Now you

just stand there and fire away at the old folks and I'll go around and steal away the little ones.'" The audience broke into a peal of laughter which utterly astounded good Doctor Tyng. Yet as a matter of fact both he and Mr. Beecher were right. One star differeth from another star in service as well as in glory.

Still, the qualifications on the part of the minister for preaching to children are just such as he will need in all his pulpit work. He must be earnest. He must be sympathetic. That is to say, his aim must be not to amuse so much as to make better, and he must put himself in the place of his hearers, and first feel with, so that he may also feel for them. It is difficult to see how this could have been the case with a certain London minister who took for his text, "Their houses shall be full of doleful creatures,"[1] and for his theme, "Disagreeable Children."

A good text will illustrate afresh the truth of the proverb, "It is the first step that counts." The text should be short, simple, and striking.[2]

"Talitha Cumi" is the text of one of Dean Stanley's sermons in Westminster Abbey, where he loved to meet the children and to talk to them.[3] A little mystery, a challenge to the fancy of the hearer, will often be useful in attracting attention.

[1] Isa. 13 : 21. [2] Trumbull, 351, 362.
[3] W. G. Blackie, "For the Work of the Ministry," p. 196.

Nowhere can better texts be found than in the great green book of nature, to which Jesus turned when he said, "Consider the lilies, *how* they grow."

Equally important is the *subject* of the address. It is not at all necessary that it be childish. The popular book with boys is the book which is heroic; and I am afraid they prefer the prodigal son who went so far afield, to the brother who stayed at home and never gave his father any trouble, nor gave him, for the matter of that, much of anything else.

What is essential in your theme is the human element. The young hearer, as much as the Roman actor, counts nothing that is human foreign to him. For this reason, Joseph and David and Daniel are favorites forever. Dean Stanley could put life into an old legend; and his story of the dying match-boy has passed into a classic.

As to the treatment of the sermon, I should say that *one idea* is, as a rule, enough. Of older people, even, is this not also true? If you can do it skillfully, bring that one idea out of the text by means of question and answer. To do this well is great art. It is wise sometimes to introduce yourself by a question; but be on your guard when you do this. The answer may not always be much to your mind. "What would you do," inquired one preacher, "if you were compelled to stand here before so many bright boys and girls, and had

nothing to say?" And the irrepressible small boy replied, without a moment's hesitation, "I'd keep quiet."

Dr. A. A. Bonar, one Sunday evening in June, appeared at a school in Edinburgh. It was the fifth school that he had addressed that day; and some of the scholars had previously heard him more than once, being lured to this unusual effort of self-sacrifice by the prospect of the impending school-treats. They were ready to vote early and often. That day the good doctor had used to excellent effect his famous children's address from the text, "Like as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wing." It began with the question "Did any of you, dear little boys or girls, ever see a hen?" But even of a good thing it is possible to have too much, and so when the usual introductory question was launched, the repeaters in that evening school, being primed for the purpose, answered, "No, sir, no! We never saw a hen—never one of us ever saw a hen!"

The tone of the address should be bright, without being frivolous. Do not misrepresent the feeling of our heavenly Father toward children. "Thou God seest me," is a good text to preach from, but remember that it has in it no terrifying thought of God detecting and punishing sin. "It occurs in one of the most beautiful and pathetic of Scripture stories, telling of Divine compassion

for those who have found man's tender mercies cruel," and it commemorates the simple faith of the outcast Hagar, when for her, under the present care of God, "the desert rejoiced and blossomed as the rose."[1] The harrowing and horrible should, as a rule, be avoided, and it is no longer desirable in the interests of good citizenship or sound life insurance that all the good should die young, even though that might be the fashion in New England in the days of Cotton Mather.

The moral,—and to every successful sermon to children there must be a moral, uttered or unexpressed,—may very well be distributed throughout the address rather than concentrated at the close. Put there, it runs a chance of being entirely neglected. When Doctor Robertson, of Irvine, preaching to the street Arabs of Glasgow, finished his story and began to apply it, one of them bade him shut up with his moral and give them another story. "I learned from that rascal," said he, "to wrap the moral well in the heart of the story; not to put it as a sting into the tail." In the same spirit as this street waif, a little girl in a much more genteel circle of society confided to her mother that she liked their new minister—"because he has no morals."

Yet I must add, with the accent of conviction,

[1] Mrs. Carus-Wilson, "Unseal the Book," p. 69.

that in every address to children the element of instruction should be found. An English bishop has lately been pleading for "teaching sermons," and one reason why men are not more attracted to the churches is probably to be found in a neglect of this truth that we must educate the minds of our congregation as well as their hearts. The same holds true with younger audiences.

As to the manner and spirit of the sermon, our first and last insistence would frame itself into the injunction, Be natural. Let us not affect simplicity, let us not pretend to feelings which we do not have, and never make the fatal blunder of talking down to children. The simplicity which I am commending is that of Reginald Heber, of whom the little child said: "Oh, I like him very much, and he told me a good many things, but I don't think he knows much more than I do." To speak like that is to recall Pascal's eulogy of the supremely good book, "Every one thinks he could have written it himself."

We shall do well to cultivate the art of speaking in words which are short and concrete. The address which began, "My dear children, I do not propose, on the present occasion, to detain you with any preliminary remarks of a recondite or abstruse character," like the Chinese criminal, carried its death sentence written on its forefront.

On the other hand, John Wesley, the greatest

ecclesiastical general in the Protestant church, prepared a sermon to children in which he used no word having more than two syllables, and many other preachers distinguished in the annals of the pulpit have done the same. There is no better example as to style than that of Dr. Samuel Cox, who found, in revising his sermons to children, "clusters of twenty and thirty, or even forty and fifty words of one syllable," and who commends the simplest and most colloquial English."

So much has been written of late on the subject of preaching to children that it looks as though at length the church were indeed waking up to its neglected opportunity. The published volumes of sermons preached to young people form a little library of themselves. The counsels and directions on the subject in homiletical text-books are wise and weighty, and no doubt, in common with the counsels and directions for all homiletical work, alternately inspire us with emulation and overshadow us with despair.

But, after all, it is at the feet of the one perfect Model that each one of us must sit and listen and learn. Not only the soldiers, impotent to arrest him, but equally the little children held willing captives in his arms, bid us acknowledge that "never man spake like this man."

V

THE MINISTER AND THE SUNDAY-SCHOOL

A comparison of the Sunday-school of the earlier times and the present day. The minister must adjust his relation to the Sunday-school. His relation to the school as a whole. The minister is the pastor of the school. His relation to the officers of the school. He must advise and supervise. His relation to the teachers of the school. An intellectual influence a spiritual power. Benefit of the work to himself.

V

THE MINISTER AND THE SUNDAY-SCHOOL

How shall we define the Sunday-school? A century of experience has changed our conception of the Sunday-school so radically that to-day we scarcely recognize it as the same thing that it was when Robert Raikes and Hannah More began their philanthropic work in the lanes of Gloucester and the villages of Somersetshire. Where can you find, in England or America, a parallel to the picture of the opening of the school at Blagden, in the west of England, which we have in Hannah More's "Mendip Annals"?[1]

> In the beginning of October, 1795, we opened one of the largest, most affecting, and interesting schools we had yet encountered, composed of a hundred and seventy young people, the greater part from eleven to twenty years of age. It was an affecting sight. Several of the grown-up youths had been tried at the last assizes. There were the children of a person lately condemned to be hanged, many thieves, all ignorant, profane, and vicious beyond belief. Not one out of the one hundred and seventy could make any reply to the question, "Who made you?"

To-day we have reached the opposite extreme,

[1] Pp. 168, 169.

and it is to be feared that some of our Sunday-schools are cheerful and sociable children's clubs for the promotion of pleasant intercourse, the circulation of popular literature, the cultivation of kindly feeling among the families of the congregation, and, incidentally, the study, not of the Bible, but of lesson notes more or less connected with it.

These extremes have certainly one thing in common. The Sunday-school of Hannah More was strictly parochial, and the Sunday-school of to-day is the same in the sense that it keeps largely within the bounds of the separate congregations. Free though we may be, if we live in America, from the parochial divisions which the State marks out in the old country, yet our own congregational bounds are of the same nature, and, while every aggressive Sunday-school by its agencies reaches out beyond these bounds, still it remains substantially true that "the Sunday-school may be defined as the church and congregation, especially children, meeting on Sunday for the study of the Scriptures." [1]

When it is faithful to its office the Sunday-school is much more like the early Christian assemblages, as they are described by Justin Martyr, for instance, than is our modern congregational gathering for public worship. Its keynote

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[1] Judson, "The Institutional Church," p. 104.

is instruction. No limit of age, of understanding, or of condition, should for one moment be recognized.

The Sunday-school, then, is not so much a branch of congregational work as it is the congregation itself. And the minister stands in just the same relation to it as he does to the congregation, understanding by the word "congregation" the whole number of those who regularly come under his spiritual influence.

How this truth has been obscured, lost sight of, finally denied altogether, history bears melancholy witness. The struggling and scattered church of the first days was, as Doctor Trumbull says:[1]

> Unable to enforce a uniform church-school system in all communities alike with carefully graded instruction from the primary class to the divinity school. The best that it could do was to provide in every local church gathering for the catechetical instruction of the young, including the children of all believers and all other children who could be brought under its care. . . Individual Christians were forward and active in efforts to reach and to teach the young whenever and wherever they might do so.

But the growth of the hierarchy in numbers, power, and assumption gradually changed the simplicity of the early church. The ministry claimed the exclusive right to instruct and then failed to

[1] "Yale Lectures," p. 48.

do it. Romanist and Protestant, State Churchman and Nonconformist alike, lay under the malediction of the Master, "Woe unto you, lawyers! for ye have taken away the key of knowledge: ye entered not in yourselves, and them that were entering in ye hindered."[1]

Confining ourselves to the area covered by the modern Sunday-school movement, we find abundant proof in Great Britain and America that the woe was well deserved. The opposition of the British clergy to that movement in its early days was often undisguised and fierce. "Sunday-schools," says Sir Charles Reed, "were attacked by prelates in the pulpit. The Bishop of Rochester notably denounced the movement and urged the clergy not to support it, and the Archbishop of Canterbury was the first man in that day to call the bishops together to consider whether something could not be done to stop this great enterprise."[2] "Later the Presbyterians of Scotland and the Congregationalists of New England were represented among the opponents of the Sunday-school as it battled its way into deserved honor."

The clerical mind, here as in other matters, was slow to change. There were from the first illustrious exceptions to the dislike or distrust with which the Sunday-school was regarded, but the

[1] Luke 11 : 52.

[2] Trumbull, pp. 114, 115.

average clergyman, when he ceased to persecute, did what is little if anything better, he patronized. "Within this month," wrote Mr. Raikes in 1787,[1] "the minister of my parish has at last condescended to give me assistance in this laborious work, which I have now carried on for six years with little or no support. He chooses that the children should come to church both morning and evening." The Bishop of Gloucester, at his visitation in July, 1786, ventured so far as to say, with genuine episcopal caution, that "he doubted not, with proper management and under the inspection of the parochial clergy, Sunday-schools might be productive of great good among the children of the poor throughout the diocese." Such a man would have patronized the angels of the Advent and faintly approved of the Declaration of Independence, always, of course, "under the inspection of the parochial clergy." The flutter in the ecclesiastical dovecots may be imagined when one of the most liberal and devoted of the Mendip clergy needed to write:

> I beg to state that the plans for instructing the children and their older relations are circumscribed by every precaution which appears to me needful or practicable in order to guard against the smallest abuse or irregularity. The whole economy of the school is under my direction and

[1] Gregory, "Robert Raikes, Journalist and Philanthropist," p. 136.

control, and nothing is done but what I, with my whole heart and to the best of my dispassionate judgment, approve.[1]

So, although with dignified deliberativeness, the clergy came to acquiesce in the Sunday-school movement. No doubt this was owing in part to the fact that the queen herself sent for Raikes to hear from his own lips "by what accident a thought which promised so much benefit to the lower order of people as the institution of Sunday-schools was suggested to his mind." At Windsor, under the shadow of the royal castle, "the ladies of fashion passed their Sundays in teaching the poorest children." There was a fair prospect that Sunday-schools, as the eighteenth century wore to its close, would become as popular with the aristocracy as in our own times slumming has been. The vagaries of fashion sometimes carry even her to the limits of serious usefulness.

The British clergy were loyal to the royal example. The name of Mr. Raikes became "a name that every clergyman should highly reverence." He was eulogized as a patriotic and virtuous citizen to whom the present generation should "raise a monument of gratitude." He was compared with Jenner, who had recently benefited the whole nation by introducing vaccination. The clergy might now safely praise the man who basked in

[1] "Mendip Annals," p. 188.

the sunshine of the royal approval and who was put side by side with the physician who had warded off the small-pox.

In America, the progress of the Sunday-school movement was almost as difficult, and from substantially the same causes. The birth of the American Sunday-school Union was probably under very humble circumstances. A colored woman, in 1793, started a Sunday-school in New York. Visitors to the schools of Robert Raikes gave shape to this and other voluntary enterprises. A minister from London put enthusiasm into the work in Philadelphia. But even at this time a young girl who dared to gather a little school in the galleries of her home church in Norwich Town, Connecticut, was forbidden to desecrate the day or the place by her unsanctioned experiment. She was driven even from the schoolhouse to which she had withdrawn, and compelled at last to take refuge on the church steps. From her baffled but victorious endeavor sprang a school which has already sent out twenty-six ministers and missionaries, several of them members of her own family.[1] And of the Sunday-school institution at large it can be said that "from an aggregate membership of a few hundred at the beginning of this century, it has come to include, within the evangelical Protestant

[1] Trumbull, p. 128.

bodies alone, from eight to ten millions, or nearly one-fifth of the entire population of the United States." [1]

In an earlier chapter we traced the idea of Christian nurture through the apostolic age to the earlier years of synagogue instruction, and still farther back to the founding of the Hebrew theocracy, and thence to the tent of Abram and the cradle of responsible family life.

We are now able to claim for the Sunday-school (which is so powerful a means of Christian nurture), that it lies, in germ, in the church of the first days. Clouded, obscured, ignored, opposed, without doubt it has kept an existence ever since. It is the glory of our own times that this stream has been cleared of its overgrowth of weeds, that its channel has been well defined, and that, as its waters have broadened and deepened, and gained in volume and speed, the old prophetic words have received a fresh fulfillment: "And everything shall live whither the river cometh." [2] Our present position, you will note, is that the Sunday-school is a part of the local church, essential to its completeness and inseparable from its successful existence. You can have the school without the church better than you can have the church without the school. Old age is not so necessary to

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[1] Trumbull, p. 131. [2] Ezek. 47 : 9.

continued life as youth, and we shall part with the grave at less cost than with the cradle. Among the first things that we have to do, therefore, if we are ministers of Jesus Christ, is to adjust our relations to the Sunday-school. To a consideration of this subject we will now turn.

And, first, the minister must settle just what is his relation to the school as a whole. I began this chapter, with the definition of the Sunday-school as the church and congregation meeting for the study of the Bible; and I did so because it is only too easy to lose sight of this close connection between the church and the school.

In England, as we have seen, the school came into existence as an independent movement. The layman rather than the minister fathered it. Only after much active opposition or cool patronage did the church recognize in the Sunday-school one of her children. In America, on the other hand, the birth of the local school—and this is especially true in the West—has, oftener than not, preceded the birth of the local church. The mother in the one case has been the daughter in the other; and the child has literally been father to the man.

Now let us understand that back of these accidents of origin, the Sunday-school is one distinct phase of the church, and therefore never independent of pastoral care and supervision. Here is the local school, meeting under the roof of the local

church. Who is responsible for its management and control? Who shall answer for its condition, commend it for its prosperity, or censure it for its ill success? I answer: The local church; and, as the representative of the church, the minister.

I confess to a jealousy of Mr. Beecher's statement, except indeed as a telling bit of rhetoric: "I think that Sunday-schools are the young people's church." This is to banish the cradle to an outhouse, to have the nursery removed to a separate dwelling. It is to encourage the error, already too general, that the young people are to have their own establishment and to receive their visitors, have their own separate circle, create and carry on their own interests, entirely indifferent to their elders. It is the boarding-house parlor and not the family sitting room that is set up as our model here. And I protest against it. The Sunday-school is *not* the children's church. The church where their parents worship is none too good for them, and it ought to be none too formal or too old. The forest trees are better for having the forest undergrowth. Give the children their place in the family circle of the church, as it surrounds the sacred table or gathers with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs to sing and make melody to the Lord.[1] My church shall be the church

[1] Eph. 5 : 19.

of my children; and their Sunday-school shall be mine as well.

The responsibility of the pastor for the Sunday-school is not optional. It is obligatory. Every department of work and worship has been committed to the minister, this among the rest.

The connection between church and school will be kept all the closer if the church sustain the school financially. A gentleman active in the public school system of Toronto says:[1]

> I would like to see Sunday-schools placed on the same footing financially with relation to the church that public schools hold toward the municipalities and the State. Does not the Sunday-school bear even a closer relation to the church than the public school does to the State? Is it not literally a department, aye, and an important department, of the church? Why then should it not have its place in the church estimates?

Whatever money is collected in the classes should go to beneficence, not to the support of the school, not to the paying of a church debt, not to defray the expenses of school festivals and picnics, but exclusively to good works. Let the school support, in whole or in part, a missionary abroad or on the home field; let it have its bed in the local hospital, its share in the fresh-air fund, its contribution to the relief of the famine or the

[1] Mr. James Hughes, Inspector of Public Schools, Crafts, "The Bible," etc., p. 70.

fire. And let the funds be allotted under the direction of a committee elected by the whole school, with the approval of the church. The officers of the school—perhaps even the teachers—should be nominated at the annual election held for the purpose, and voted upon, always subject to the approval of the church.

To the quickened sense of pastoral responsibility we owe it that the local church is gathering about it so many organizations for Christian endeavor, for manual or mental training, for associations of young men and young women, which fifty years ago would have been started each upon its independent basis. It is little to the credit of the church that in the eighteenth century she suffered the Sunday-school to be begun by laymen, and for years held the most valuable of her auxiliaries at arm's length. That the Christian Associations for young men and young women have been launched very much in the same way is little to the credit of the church in the nineteenth century.

I think that what has already been said settles the minister's relation to his Sunday-school. He is as much the pastor of the school as he is of the fellowship. He is as much interested in the choice of a superintendent as he is in the choice of a deacon or an elder.

I venture to counsel that from the first the minister be very watchful over himself in this matter. Let him avoid, by all means, assuming a hostile position toward the officers of the school or its management. Let the superintendent be his close ally. It has sometimes been whispered that the relations between the president and vice-president in the republic are apt to be strained. The officer who comes next to you in rank is the one for whom unconsciously to yourself feelings of petty jealousy may creep into your heart. The superintendent of the Sunday-school is like the general in the field, the pastor is rather the minister of war. There is always danger of friction. Let the minister be on his guard against it. Let him make the superintendent his personal friend and his official confidant. Let him be his associate, not in any sense his rival.

I trust that I need not warn any minister against falling into a condition of indifference to the school. A farmer might as well be indifferent to his spring wheat. It is of the first importance that he keep in close touch with every teacher in his class and with every officer at his work. The secret of the success of the late A. T. Stewart, the drygoods merchant of New York, was said to be that he was always in the store himself, and that no single salesman was long out of his sight. The care of all the churches was that which daily

came upon the apostle,[1] and the care of all the interests of the school should equally come upon the minister.

And yet, at the same time, if he is prudent he will not allow himself to be meddlesome. The clerical weakness of omniscience is one to which a minister easily yields. Many of us are credited with so much more wisdom than we really possess that it is not a very difficult matter for us to believe that, like Lord John Russell in Sydney Smith's playful satire, we could take command of the channel fleet, build St. Peter's, and perform the most delicate surgical operation at an hour's notice. The ability of the minister is seen, not in doing ten men's work, but in setting ten men to do it for themselves.

If the minister makes the best of his relation to the school he will find that nowhere is there a nobler field for the cultivation of that rare pastoral gift which Doctor Chalmers in his stately rhetoric was wont to call "the prosperous management of human nature."

Having said so much as to the minister and the school, it is easy to pass on to consider what should be his relation to its officers.

The old Greek said, "He is the best shoemaker who, out of the leather that he has nearest to his

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[1] 2 Cor. 11 : 28.

hand, makes the best pair of shoes." I think there is nothing more foolish in a minister than to quarrel with his materials. The despondent tone is fatal to success. "If any one attempts to haul down the American flag, shoot him on the spot," wired General Dix on the eve of the Civil War, and the whole North promptly waked up to the certainty of success. Never haul down your flag; never even fly it at half-mast, as though there were a funeral aboard. Make the officers and teachers hopeful by your confident air. The "gently complaining and fatigued spirit" which Mr. Galton finds in the majority of clergymen is an insult to God and to his world. The minister who adopts it deserves the same fate—in a parliamentary sense, of course—as the man who hauls down the American flag.

Let us honor our teachers. Let us discover their virtues and excellencies. The church just now is not crying out for critics, but for helpers. The way to get better teachers is to make the very best of those we already have.

I think what has to be said on this part of our subject may fall under two divisions. The minister must advise his teachers and he must supervise them.

First. He must advise.

The school, as a whole, is only one of a vast number of similar organizations. Upon no branch

of Christian work is so much thought expended. By all means let the minister keep himself posted, through the various excellent Sunday-school publications, in every advance which the army of schools is making. Without showing himself eager to advise the adoption of every new method that is being discussed, let him never allow his mind to fossilize. A school which is growing must devise fresh plans for further increase. Can you canvass the neighborhood? Can you make each class a recruiting agency? Can you use the press to better advantage? Is there an advance all along the line? To debate such matters, let the teachers be met every now and then, and let these and other questions be open for free discussion.

It is of the first importance that the minister advise, without dictating, as to the men in office in the school. Let him find which way the current is turning and wisely direct it. If it is possible to have as his assistant in the pastorate a man qualified to superintend the school, this is in many respects a model arrangement. The work which has been done by our volunteer superintendents, while busy through the week in their daily avocations, has been beyond all praise. It is so still. But when a Sunday-school is well up in the hundreds, and is situated in a neighborhood favorable to growth, it almost becomes a necessity that one

man, in addition to the minister, should give his exclusive attention to it. The trouble with many of our churches seems to be that, unlike some armies we have heard of, even if adequately manned, they are insufficiently officered.

Let the minister advise with his teachers as to the size and character of the classes and as to every permanent addition to the teaching force. The band of regular teachers is a kind of cabinet; and the more he takes it into his counsels the more likely will it be that the whole school will pull unitedly in the right way. All this will require to be done by him judiciously. He need not preside at teachers' meetings, although he will do well to be generally present at them; but the teachers should instinctively feel that his mind is to be sought whenever the interests of the school are under discussion.

More pronounced will be the minister's influence in the supervision of the school. The teaching band first demands his attention. In the opening days of this movement, the teachers were many of them paid. The present disposition to engage a superintendent, well trained for that specific work, and to pay him as one of the salaried officers of the church, is practically a return to an early method. There are instances—but they are rare—in which even teachers are paid. As a rule, the whole work of Sunday-school instruction is volun-

tary. And the volunteer Sunday-school corps, like the volunteer choir in the church, labors under this disadvantage, that it seems ungracious to find any fault with it. When the illiterate Indian preacher told a passing traveler that his salary was five dollars a year and a fish pole, the traveler naturally replied that this was "mighty poor pay," and the Indian grunted back that it was also "mighty poor preach." I have no inclination to apply that story very closely; but we cannot shut our eyes to the fact that, take the country over, the teaching in our Sunday-schools is not what it might be. I should not say so much as this—knowing how dangerous it is to indulge in glittering generalities—were it not that I wish to fasten not a little of the responsibility for the sort of teachers to be found in the Sunday-school upon the minister. Far more care should be exercised in their appointment. And, which is a point on which I would lay the utmost stress, when appointed the pastor should see to it that week by week the lesson for the next Sunday is intelligently studied. One of the best ways to freeze out an incompetent teacher is to raise the intellectual tone of the whole school. The scholars will soon find out his incapacity, and in time even the teacher may have sufficient grace to find it out himself.

I would earnestly counsel that the minister en-

courage in his school not the multiplication of classes, so much as their efficiency. If ever it should fall to his lot to build a school, let him remember that he can scarcely have too many class-rooms. In the hall where all meet there should be scarcely any teaching done. We have been aiming at the impossible in trying to find in a church of, say, four hundred members, a teaching staff of forty. Each class may be allowed to become just as numerous as its teacher can make it, and the influence of some masters of the art of popular Bible exposition with present-day application, is to be seen in the multitudes that flock to their class-rooms.

Take the utmost care in the selection of teachers for the kindergarten department. Here from the ages of three to seven gather the little children, too young as yet to be admitted into the public schools, but not too young to receive impressions that will be more enduring than many lessons later learned. The large church may well "employ a devout and trained kindergartner, who shall not only educate the child's mind and body with the charming symbolic exercises of the kindergarten, but also tell the story of the life of Christ, and teach the child Christian prayers and hymns."[1] If equal to doing so, the kindergarten

[1] Judson, p. 172.

should be established as a weekday institution in the church, but often this will not be possible. What I am now pleading for is: The teacher of little children will learn, as well as her scholars. She will be more and more impressed with the beauty as well as with the mystery of infancy, and will sympathize with Jean Paul Richter when he says: "A single child upon the earth would seem to us a wonderful angel, come from some distant home, who, unaccustomed to our strange language, manners, and air, looks at us speechless and inquisitive."

As a final word upon this subject of the teaching force, let me beg all to remember that, in this business of religious instruction, character is of the utmost moment. A frivolous teacher, a teacher loving the world more than the church, a teacher mentally equipped but morally defective, should be discouraged from further teaching. I have known a teacher of very moderate ability who so impressed his moral personality upon his class that he became to many of his scholars the most powerful influence for good through all their after lives. "Character is capital" in the ministry, and scarcely less is this true also in the case of the teacher. To him I may venture to apply the words of Dr. Austin Phelps: "Call him what you will, dress him as you please, put him where you choose, he is practically a minister of the gospel."

Of late years we have grasped more firmly than at first the wider mission of the Sunday-school. We have made it central to a network of organizations. Without it the Christian Endeavor Society, the gymnasium, the band of hope, the junior missionary bands, the boys' orchestra, the young people's literary society, the church sociable, and a dozen other institutions, could scarcely exist. The parish house, in one form or another, has risen as a necessary adjunct to the church building. All this is well. Still, the minister will need to be watchful over these various interests. Let him not multiply them without good reason. Let him not allow the thin end of the wedge of rivalry, frivolity, or roughness to get a chance. The wise direction of the church sociable is no easy matter. Let the minister as soon as possible add a good stereopticon to his plant. Let him introduce his young people, by means of it, to the wonders of the world, to the great scenes of history, to the masterpieces of art. Let him not condescend to enter the field, as many churches have done, in competition with the music hall or the variety theatre. The mission of the church is not to amuse, it is to elevate. Yet, keeping the idea of the family, the minister can shed through the school an atmosphere of good cheer; and he can make it the center of light and sweetness, drawing to it the young life of the community.

A word as to another valuable adjunct to the school. I mean the library. Care should be taken to have an intelligent committee to select books for it. It will be well that the pastor serve upon this committee himself. There are two extremes to be avoided in a Sunday-school library, books that will not get read and books that ought not to get read. A glance at the shelves will very likely give a sample of the first of these. Books "as good as new," which means good for little or nothing; black-bound, well printed, with no weak pandering to the fancy by illustrations other than an occasional portrait: "The Memoir of the Reverend Ahasuerus Brittle, D. D."; "The Early Bud Blighted"; "The Chronological Tables of the Kings of Judah and Israel"; a "Treatise on Predestination," and "A Life of Joseph in Words of One Syllable." A healthy boy to read any of these must be reduced to the extremity of intellectual starvation; he must be where the besieged army is when the soldiers eat their shoe soles.

On the other hand, there are books which are popular and eagerly sought for, but which have no true place in the Sunday-school library. We have advanced far beyond the point at which our fathers drew the line. We no longer discuss the mission of fiction. We recognize the good work that it can do. But the Sunday-school library may be the only avenue open to many children for

gaining access to the better kinds of readable literature and of fiction among the rest. Miss Yonge and George Macdonald, Tom Hughes and Charles Kingsley, Nathaniel Hawthorne and Miss Mulock, and so on down to the books of Mrs. Wiggins and Ralph Connor and Mrs. Mason, how they have enriched the shelves dear to boys and girls. More serious works will find readers too. The success of John G. Paton's books of missionary adventure showed conclusively that a true man can always command his audience when he has something to say and knows how to say it. I need only urge two points in passing: first, that we remember how poor and worthless, and often how demoralizing, is the literature in the home, with its Sunday paper and dime novel; and secondly, that we believe in the intelligence of our scholars. A Sunday-school lesson may be made to suggest reading in Jewish antiquities; in the geography, manners, customs, and present condition of Bible lands; in the history of the time and the great leaders living in other parts of the world, which will reveal the slumbering faculty and give to many a scholar a healthful intellectual impulse of great value to his whole after career.

What has been said here as to pastoral supervision has been little more than by way of suggestion. But it may have opened up the increased and loftier sense of a pastor's responsi-

bility which comes to the man who gratefully accepts the view of the minister's relation to the school and to its officers which I am pressing home in this chapter.

I have reserved to the last the discussion of what is in many respects the most important branch of our subject, namely, the minister's relation to the teachers of the school.

Among them he must be alike an intellectual and a spiritual force. These are the points which remain to be considered.

And, first, he should be *intellectually* powerful in the teaching corps of his school.

If our view of the magnitude of Sunday-school work be correct, then the minister is fully warranted in giving a good share of his time and thought to it. Should it seem that I am laying a burden too heavy upon the minister in what I am about to recommend, I can only answer that I am speaking from personal experience when I urge him to be in the widest sense of the term a teacher of teachers. There is no branch of ministerial labor, I believe, which will more richly repay him than this.

Occasionally, then, once in so many years, it will be well for him to form a normal class and teach it himself. A series of ten or fifteen studies under the guidance of a simple handbook will be sufficient. The months of the spring or of the

fall will be a good time for the exercise. Let it be kept to one hour, on an evening free from all other church engagements, and let the platform be furnished with a blackboard and maps.

The two ends to aim at in a normal class are instructing in the art of teaching and instructing in the things that have to be taught. One has not in this exercise to expound the lesson for the next Sunday, but rather to show the teacher how to handle his Bible, how to master its contents, and how best to explain and apply the truths which it sets forth.

The minister's first duty is to instruct in the art of teaching. So few Sunday-school teachers know anything about this that sometimes there is no sight more pitiful than the teacher on the verge of the half-hour given to instructing his class. You have a strong inclination to call in the humane society as to a case of cruelty to animals or to send for the fire brigade and have that teacher put out, like a conflagration. You instinctively envy the promptitude of the editor who, when the fresh hand, nibbling his pen, inquired, "What shall I write about?" answered, "Right about face," and showed him to the door. "And yet show I you a more excellent way" with the teacher. Let us help him to teach. He has had no training. His work through the week, in store or office, has not done much for him. It is our duty to take him in

hand. "On the manner of teaching," says Doctor Channing,[1] "how much depends! I fear it is not sufficiently studied by Sunday-school instructors. They meet generally, and ought regularly to meet, to prepare themselves for their tasks. But their object commonly is to learn what they are to teach rather than how to teach it, but the last requires equal attention with the first, I had almost said more." It will be wise if the pastor occasionally turn the band of teachers into a class, or make a selection from the number for the purpose, and so give an object-lesson in how best a lesson may be taught. This need not be done frequently. Always, however, he will need to keep plainly before the minds of the teachers the fact that three things are essential in a good instructor: First, to study the truth of the lesson as authoritative; secondly, to arrive at clear ideas as to just what the lesson means; and, thirdly, to get the best possible way of expressing it. Teaching, let us remember, is the teacher's first duty; not counsel, or appeal, or story-telling. The teaching should not be too scholastic. It is not of the first importance that the scholar knows the distance from Jerusalem to Jericho or the specific gravity of the Dead Sea. A casual hearer of Dean Stanley's, at Westminster Abbey, came away from the service

[1] "Works," p. 366.

saying, "I went to hear about the way to heaven; I heard only about the way to Palestine." Yet it is well to remember that the teacher is to learn how to set forth truth to intelligent creatures. "Children love knowledge,"[1] says Henry Ward Beecher; "treat them as rational human beings. Believe that the foundation element in them is curiosity, as you call it; that is, the nascent form of philosophical feeling, the knowing states of mind that are to be developed in them." It was when the nineteenth century was yet young, and, shall I say, foolish? that an American religious magazine discussed the question, "Can Children Reason?" and now, when its successor is yet young, one wonders whether those learned disputants were sworn to eternal celibacy, or whether the American children have developed since then a new faculty under the impulse of evolution. Certainly they are as rational as their elders, and possibly not more unreasonable than they.

The normal class will further be of service for instructing the teachers in the things to be taught. "Present Bibles!" is the direction of the superintendent in a Chicago Sunday-school, just before the reading of the morning lesson; and every teacher and scholar holds up a copy of the Bible. This is excellent, and suggests that what the

[1] "Yale Lectures," II., 185.

teacher has to learn is how to teach the Bible. I am told that in the Sunday-school of the future the normal class will include a course in mental and moral philosophy, pedagogics, child-mind, and kindergarten.[1] Such an announcement reconciles one to the approach of old age, and adds another charm to the prospect of the grave. Meanwhile, the Bible will probably suffice for people of ordinary intelligence and leisure. It was the early text book in the Jewish schools and among the first Christians as they gathered their children for religious instruction.[2] In it the Albigenses, the Lollards, the Wycliffites, and the followers of John Huss, trained their families; and at this hour it is the basis of the admirable teaching given in their schools by the Waldenses, who thereby maintain the noble traditions of a thousand years.[3]

The course of instruction which is given in the normal class should embrace Bible history, and the history of the Bible; the growth of the canon and the order of the books; the geography, national history, and leading characteristics of the lands of the Bible; and, finally, a consideration of the principal truths with which the book deals. To this normal class study all may be invited who wish

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[1] Mead, "Modern Methods in Church Work," p. 241.

[2] Edersheim, "Sketches," etc., p. 125. Trumbull, p. 63.

[3] "*Quelques Explications pour aider l'Etude de la Bible*," Toni Petrie, 1898.

to come; and from it there may be found a supply of teachers in an emergency.

The normal class, as I have said, may be needed only once in so many years. And if the pastor is fortunate in his association with brother ministers, the burden of it may easily be shared with others. But it should not be allowed to pass into incapable hands. Not every man has the necessary equipment of studiousness, mental alacrity, popular address, good temper, and devotion to his work to do it well.

There is another class which, in my judgment, the pastor had better conduct himself. I mean the preparation class, in which the following Sunday's lesson is carefully studied. One evening in the week should be given up entirely to this engagement. Writing to me on the subject, Dr. A. F. Schauffler, of New York, an expert in conducting such a class, says:

> Might I venture to ask you to put very special emphasis on the influence which a pastor ought to exercise as the teacher of his teachers? The whole question of the leadership of teachers' meetings is one of very great importance, and ministers in any city who develop the power of leading a union teachers' meeting, have a field opened to them second perhaps to none other in the world.

I am afraid that it is with good reason that Doctor Schauffler adds:

> Multitudes of ministers are graduated from our seminaries

who have no faintest conception of the field of usefulness thus open to them. They think so little of teachers' meetings that they pay no attention to the subject.

An experience of many years in conducting this meeting—which I always threw open to all, from any school or congregation, who desired to attend it—confirms me in my hearty approval of these words.

Let the minister take the lesson exposition himself. Let him prepare for it as thoroughly as he would for a sermon. Short of making the attendance of his own teachers obligatory let him do all in his power to have them there regularly. The task is not an easy one, but it will pay a hundred fold. The two foes to teaching among ministers, from the beginning, have been preaching and ritual. This exercise may go a long way toward teaching them how to teach in their sermon work. It may break up the parson-tone into which the enemy so readily beguiles many good men. It will certainly furnish many a rich text and useful theme for the pulpit.

The instruction of the hour may take one of two forms. It may be cast in the mold of a running exposition, with blackboard accompaniment, and opportunity, either by word of mouth or in writing, for any who wish to ask questions at the close. Or—which it is no doubt preferable when a capable leader conducts it—the lesson may be taken

up by means of questions and answers. "The object is not merely to give instruction, but to put it into a communicable form, so that in learning the hearers may be prepared to teach. Questions should be asked by the conductor of the class as to the leading points of the lesson. . . Better still, questions should be invited from the members of the class, that their own difficulties may be fairly stated, and that the mental needs of the scholars whom they represent may be adequately given."[1]

It remains that in this chapter I glance, much more briefly than the subject deserves, at the minister's spiritual power among his teachers. What the moral influence—the higher personality—of a principal is in the public school, that should the religious influence—the highest personality—of the minister be in the Sunday-school.

The great danger of Sunday-schools, as Doctor Channing said, "is that they will fall into a course of mechanical teaching, that they will give religion as a lifeless tradition, and not as a quickening reality. To wake up the soul to a clear, affectionate perception of the reality and truth and greatness of religion, is the great end of teaching."

I think that at least once every month the pastor should meet the officers and teachers of the school for prayer and conference—and for nothing

[1] S. G. Green, "Christian Ministry," etc., p. 187.

else. The promotion of the spiritual life of this body is of immense importance. Among the secondary blessings of such a meeting (as well as of class prayer meetings, which he can also hold occasionally), will be the development of spiritual efficiency among the teachers. They will learn to pray in public to edification. They will become accustomed to hear their own voices in the statement of religious experience.

At this meeting also, which need not be prolonged beyond half an hour at the most, the minister may give his teachers valuable suggestions as to how to do evangelistic work with their scholars. On this point Rev. W. F. Crafts says :

> It would be an excellent practice to devote fifteen minutes at each weekly teachers' meeting to the use of the Bible with inquirers. Let the superintendent or pastor state some difficulty, such as is presented by those who are seeking Christ, and ask from the teacher the appropriate passages to cancel the difficulty.[1]

More will need to be said on this important subject in our next chapter, when we propose to carry the minister into the school itself. What I now urge upon him in his ministry is, in a word, to regard the teachers in his Sunday-school as assistant pastors. So Dr. Edward Judson puts the matter :

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[1] "The Bible in the Sunday-school," p. 55.

> Let the pastor commit to the care of his teachers the families represented in their classes. Let the teachers call upon these families regularly and report their condition to the pastor. . . Strangers will be visited, because families are in the habit of throwing their children out as feelers. The sick will not be overlooked. The whole church will become a compact social organism.[1]

I wonder, in bringing this chapter to a close, whether it has seemed to any one as though I were laying a good deal on the minister? He has so much to do already! With reference to not a little the pastor does or seems to do—the "busy idleness" which eats into his time—I am disposed to think that both he and the church may dispense with it sooner than with this fine discipline of mind and soul to which I am urging him. And let me say that, whether these Sunday-school engagements—a regular preparation class for his teachers once a week, an occasional normal class, gatherings at stated or special intervals for directly religious conference and prayer—whether these prove irksome or refreshing will depend very largely on himself. It is inexpressibly good to be working in the nurseries of life with the young plants and saplings. They said that on into her old age, Rosa Bonheur, the greatest animal painter of the last century, carried the charm of an eighteen-year-old girl because she loved so enthusiastically

[1] "The Institutional Church," p. 106.

the cattle and deer of her forest at Fontainebleau. It is even better, more invigorating, and more inspiring, to live among the children and to live for them. The minister should be more than a teacher of teachers; yes, more, and better. He should be their atmosphere, "to teach them the fundamental truths of Christianity without neglecting their spiritual affections and religious feelings, and to make them love each other, and love the church, and associate with the whole round of religion the most joyous thoughts and feelings."[1] Under such a conviction as this the minister will find his reward for every hour of preparatory study which he may give to the exposition of the Sunday-school lesson and for all the pains he may expend in advising and supervising the devoted band of teachers that he will be sure to gather about him. Here, as in many other branches of pastoral service, finding it a joyful toil, he will come to prove the truth of Macbeth's words,

The labor we delight in physics pain.

[1] Beecher, "Yale Lectures," III., 188.

VI

THE MINISTER IN THE SUNDAY-SCHOOL

Beginning of the Sunday-school in England and America. Three watchwords : Reformation, information, regeneration. There must be a power to reform. The Sunday-school must also educate. Bible study. Occasional services conducted by the minister. Memorizing Scripture. The catechism. Should the minister be a teacher? The regenerating mission of the Sunday-school. The minister should be well known by the scholars. He must take the lead in special efforts for their spiritual welfare. The subject of religious decision to be made prominent. A child's religion. The minister a unifying influence between home and school and church and school.

VI

THE MINISTER IN THE SUNDAY-SCHOOL

On the Thames Embankment, in London, the people of England have raised a statue in honor of Robert Raikes, the Gloucester printer, to whom, more than to any other one man, Sunday-schools owe their birth. The site of the statue is well chosen, beside the noble river which, rising in the county where Raikes was born, is now moving swiftly toward the sea. It suggests the great enterprise which from very humble beginnings has swept on in its beneficent course until the whole world is the better for it. Dean Farrar gives voice to a feeling which we all share with him when he says that he never passes that statue without a sense of pleasure.

Raikes tells us, after seeing the ragged children rioting about on Sunday in the streets of Gloucester: "As I asked, 'Can nothing be done?' a voice answered, 'Try.' I did try," he says, "and see what God hath wrought." There are now Sunday-school teachers by tens of thousands all over the world, but, humanly speaking, they all owe their origin to that one word, "try," so softly whispered by some voice divine to the loving and tender conscience of Robert Raikes a hundred years ago. The echoes of that word might be prolonged by millions of grateful children who

have been taught for generation after generation by loving teachers in Sunday-schools.

How it all came about Robert Raikes often told his friends:

> The utility of an establishment of this sort was first suggested by a group of miserable little wretches whom I observed one day in the street where many people employed in the pin manufactory reside. I was expressing my concern to one at their forlorn and neglected state, and was told that if I were to pass through that street upon Sundays it would shock me indeed to see the crowds of children who were spending that sacred day in noise and riot, to the extreme annoyance of all decent people. I immediately determined to make some little effort to remedy the evil.[1]

Reformation, then, was the first thought in the Sunday-school system. But another followed, of necessity. In the same letter from which I have been quoting Raikes sounds a still higher note. In these schools "children may be received," he says, "upon the Sunday, and then engaged in learning to read and to repeat their catechism or anything else that may be deemed proper to open their minds to a knowledge of their duty to God, to their neighbors, and themselves." Reformation was to go hand in hand with information. These, however, were not enough. Within a year or two John Wesley, with characteristic devotion to the true purpose of being, writes: "I find these schools

[1] Gregory's "Raikes," p. 60.

springing up wherever I go. Perhaps God may have a deeper end therein than men are aware of. Who knows but some of these schools may become nurseries of Christians?" To his mind it is evident that reformation and information were incomplete unless they led to transformation.

In America the Sunday-school system, while it did not spring directly from the movement in the mother country, was so radical in its action that, although it may have grown out of the catechetical practice in the churches, it really amounted to a revolution.[1] No doubt the shocking condition of morals in England in the last century—when even in a cathedral city such as Gloucester, abounding in clergymen, "the streets swarmed with rogues and vagabonds, who were flogged through the city weekly by scores," and where George Whitefield was known only as a dirty little rascal who robbed his mother's till and tried to quiet his conscience by giving part of the plunder to the poor,—made the movement more reformatory in its character than in the happier districts of New England; but there was need of moral dynamite everywhere. And this the Sunday-school movement gave. The minister, as he comes to his Sunday-school to take his share in this important branch of Christian work, will do well to keep in mind the

[1] "Life of Dr. Jeter," p. 26.

three impelling forces—reformation, information, transformation—with which the young enterprise was started a hundred and twenty years ago.

First, then, let him remember that there must be in the Sunday-school a power to reform, a moral influence. This lay at the root of the Jewish school system. "The grand object of the teacher was moral as well as intellectual training. To keep children from all intercourse with the vicious; to suppress all feelings of bitterness, even though wrong had been done to one's parents; to punish all wrong-doing; rather to show sin in its repulsiveness than to predict what punishment would follow, either in this or the next world, so as not to 'discourage' the child—such are some of the rules laid down" in the Talmud.[1]

The minister may well use the school for inculcating by example some of the minor moralities —courtesy, for instance, and considerateness—to which slight attention is paid in many homes. Much will depend upon him in these matters. The aim of the parochial system was to put a gentleman in every parish, and, whether it succeeded or not, it was a true and noble aim. On the part of the minister, grace of manner, politeness, and instinctive respect for the teacher—keeping him from intruding and from interrupting him in his

[1] Edersheim, "Sketches," etc., p. 135.

work, a careful regard for the office of superintendent, and a public recognition on every occasion of him who fills the office—will impress the scholars with the beauty of courtesy.

The Sunday-school never stops with itself. The home must feel its power. Some of the first schools were held in private houses.[1] It was in a weaver's cottage in Lancashire that a school was gathered to the clanging of an old brass pestle and mortar by a poor bobbin winder some years before Raikes began his work. And nowhere, I suppose, more than in this same English county has the Sunday-school reached the home with such practical organizations as beneficiary and sick and burial clubs.[2]

Of the late R. W. Dale, of Birmingham, his biographer says that "he never forgot that of most children it may be said that if they have no church in the home they have no home in the church." But, judged by this criterion, how many homes are no homes. The school alone, of all the agencies of the church, is likely to reach them with its saving message. From it, therefore, the minister will do well to launch any movement—such as the "Pleasant Sunday Afternoons"—for the bettering and brightening of the common lot of the men and women all about him. From

[1] Gregory, p. 47.

[2] Mead, "Modern Methods," etc., Chap. XXXVII.

the school he can carry the news of every such organization to the homes of the scholars. I do not mean that the church is to be known in the neighborhood as a place of entertainment. Such it is not. With Dr. A. J. Gordon I say: "The rage for church amusement which the last few years have witnessed has filled me with sincere alarm. No reader of history can be ignorant of the fact that it was precisely this process by which the apostasy and corruption of Christianity were originally accomplished." And, with him, I believe that the Society of Christian Endeavor "has turned the energy and activity of our young people into a better channel." It is well that the school should be known in the home by the various ministries of that society, but it is not well—it is shameful and humiliating—that it should be known by degrading the scholars into touts and ticket agents for what has been called, not too severely, "the devil's mission of amusement."

Widening our circle, we remark that the minister may, through the instruction given to the scholars and the example set them, do something to promote civic purity. It would be interesting, were there space to do so, to trace this in some concrete example,—in Birmingham, England, for instance, which has been called the best governed city in the world, and which has become so in the last forty years, mainly because a body of young

men, ministers and Sunday-school teachers chiefly, gave themselves with self-sacrificing ardor to the good of the community.

Nor need we stay here. The Sunday-school has exerted a national influence. The work of Robert Raikes was scarcely six years old when the Gloucestershire magistrates passed a unanimous vote to the effect that "the benefit of Sunday-schools to the morals of the rising generation is too evident not to merit the recognition of this bench and the thanks of the community to the gentlemen instrumental in promoting them."[1] Indeed, it was the dreadful condition of the prisons, making him write "could unhappy wretches see the misery that awaits them in a crowded gaol they would surely relinquish the gratifications that reduce them to such a state of wretchedness," and "the thought of the convict ships carrying out about one thousand miserable creatures who might have lived, perhaps happily, in this country had they been early taught good principles," that led Raikes to begin his schools. And, even after he had gathered his scholars in classes and brought them into some kind of order, how much of the criminal element remained we may judge from the words of an eye-witness: "There were always bad 'uns coming in. I know the parents of one or two of

[1] Gregory, p. 81.

them used to walk them to school with fourteen-pound weights tied to their legs to keep them from running away. Other boys would come with wood tied to their ankles." So bad were they that Raikes, at times, had to take them home to their parents to be "walloped," and he used to stop and see it done. Sometimes the boys would be "belted" or strapped all the way to school. No one would take any notice of punishment being inflicted in Sunday-schools when they were first started. The only sense that would appeal to the boys who were first got together was the sense of pain. Corporal punishment only very slowly died out of the discipline of the Sunday-schools in Great Britain. Possibly it is not wholly dead yet. In New England the catechism (which was the Sunday-school in germ) was certainly a powerful agent in repressing evil and promoting good citizenship, and one of the eulogists of that old-fashioned instrument for the welfare of the parish, challenges his audience with the questions, "Did you ever know any man who was brought up on the catechism who did not vote on rainy days, and vote right too? No. Did you ever know a defaulter, or a communist, or a profane swearer, or a bulldozer, who was brought up on the catechism? No."[1] This is, no doubt, the testimony of a par-

[1] Dorus Clarke, "Saying the Catechism," pp. 38, 39.

tial witness; but without any question the effect of the training in the Sunday-school on the home, the neighborhood, and the whole community was very marked. "The mere fact," it has been said, "that children attend the Sunday-school brings the subject of religion, week after week, before the minds of the parents, and is a standing admonition that the fear of the Lord should be the law of the household." [1] After twenty-five years' experience of Sunday-schools in Ireland, the parliamentary report testified to their influence on the moral character and in promoting deference to the laws; while in Wales, the Royal Education Commission, by the mouth of one of its officials, declared that "in little more than half a century the Sunday-school has been the main agency in effecting that change in the moral and social population of the country, to which a parallel can scarcely be found in history." [2]

The minister has yet to understand his office who does not view himself as an influence on the community. He is called upon to deal with men and women in their social, their civic, and their national relations. It is the homes of the coming years that are about him in the school, it is the citizens who soon will cast their ballots, it is the factors for weal or woe of the century, at whose

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[1] Trumbull, pp. 162, 163. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 165.

doors we stand. "The twig will become a tree," as the son of William the Silent said, called so early by the assassin's bullet to take his father's place. That is what you need to remember. "He who helps a child," to quote the words of Phillips Brooks, "helps humanity with a distinctiveness, with an immediateness, which no other help given to human creatures in any other stage of their human life can possibly give again. The thing that made the divine Master indignant as he stood there in Jerusalem was that he dreamed of seeing before him a man who had harmed some of these little ones, and he said of any such ruffian, 'It were better for him that he never had been born.' It is such an awful thing to hurt a child's life; to aid a child's life is beautiful." [1]

How much the Sunday-school has changed in its character will be evident if I have been followed thus far. The well-to-do and the reputable have taken possession of the organization which was intended at first only for the poor and unfortunate. As has so often happened in the history of the world, Pharaoh's dream has been reversed, and the seven rank and full ears have devoured the seven thin ears, blasted with the East wind.

Robert Raikes was an old man, when in his retirement there came to visit him a young Quaker

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[1] Phillips Brooks, "Essays and Addresses," pp. 506, 507.

named Joseph Lancaster, who was then absorbed in the plan, which afterward made his name famous in the annals of popular education, for giving week-day instruction to the children of the poor. Leaning on the arm of his visitor, Raikes led him through the thoroughfares of Gloucester to the spot in a back street where the first school was held. "Pause here," said the old man. Uncovering his head and closing his eyes, he stood for a moment in silent prayer. Then turning toward his friend, while the tears rolled down his cheeks, he said, "This is the spot on which I stood when I saw the destitution of the children and the desecration of the Sabbath by the inhabitants of the city." And then he added, referring to the incident mentioned in the first sentences of this chapter, "As I asked, 'Can nothing be done?' a voice answered, 'Try.' I did try, and see what God has wrought. I can never pass by this spot, where the word 'try' came so powerfully into my mind, without lifting up my hands and heart to heaven in gratitude to God for having put such a thought into my heart." The meeting on that memorable spot of the two men who did so much, the one for sacred and the other for secular schools, seems to me a subject fit for a painter. Already the time had come when the Sunday-school could hope to keep itself to its own true vocation. At first, perforce, a great part of its

work had been to teach reading and writing. I myself was once granted the use of a vacant warehouse for a Sunday-school in a poor and crowded district of an English city on condition that we taught not reading and writing only, but arithmetic as well. All this is now changed; the public school takes its moral and religious character from the Sunday-school, and the minister must remember in his dealings with his scholars of how much moment this is. Aim, by all means, to make the Sunday-school not the young people's church, but the place where the whole congregation meets to study the Bible. "The righteous," said the rabbis, "go from the synagogues to the school; from the place of prayer to the place of study."[1] Entering the synagogue Bible-school at six years old, "the Jewish scholar never came to an age for graduation from that school." The way to keep the young people in the school is for the older people to remain in it; and first of all, for the minister to do so.

We may begin, therefore, by laying it down as the duty of the minister to be found in the Sunday-school every Sunday. Occasionally, but not as a matter of course, let him offer prayer at the opening or closing of the exercises. Let him be ready to review the last Sunday's lesson before the les-

[1] Trumbull, p. 16.

son for the day is taken up. Or, he may review, briefly and with spirit, the lesson just taught, before the school is dismissed. Let him not, in either case, spend more than a few minutes over his review. He should have a blackboard and learn, for it is an art, to use it deftly and to good purpose.

Anyhow, let the minister be there. He needs to learn that it is really not necessary in order to exert an influence that he be always talking. He can talk too much and be heard too often. His silence may do as much good as his speech, possibly sometimes even more. To be seen there, ready for service or suggestion, is what must, first of all, be expected of him.

I think much may be said in favor of a brief exercise, say of five minutes, in which the pastor drills the school in memorizing Scripture. Let none misunderstand me. The parrot method is, of course, to be condemned. In its feeblest and most tyrannical days, the "Catechism of the Westminster Assembly" was taught thus, but so it was never intended to be taught. Learning by rote is not really learning at all. The understanding is not called into play. But with this word of warning, I heartily commend the practice of learning the very words of Scripture. There is certainly known to me one compendium of "Treasure Texts" for youthful memories which might be used with

advantage occasionally in our schools, and very likely there are more.[1]

Shall we venture a step farther and remind our readers how powerful an agent in religious education the catechism has been? "A boy," said Lord Bacon, "can preach, but a man only can catechise." Perhaps the prevalence of preaching and the paucity of catechetical instruction is, in part at least, explained here. Among the Jews, and in the early church, one suspects that Lord Bacon's words would have called forth hearty assent. You remember that our Lord's public life[2] may almost be said to lie between the scene in the temple, when he is found among the doctors hearing them and asking them questions, and that other scene, not long before the end, when, put to shame and silence by his words, the lawyers "durst not from that day forth ask him any more questions."[3] The buildings of the early church were constructed in part with a special view to the catechumen,[4] and the frequent questions in the sermons of the greatest of the preachers of the first days, notably Chrysostom, were not alone for rhetorical effect.[5] They were, in part certainly, survivals of the golden time when the pew not only might, but must answer back to the pulpit. The catechisms of the

[1] "Treasure Texts." Boston: The Pilgrim Press.
[2] Luke 2 : 46. [3] Matt. 22 : 46.
[4] Trumbull, p. 51. [5] *Ibid.*, p. 60.

great churches of Christendom are standing proofs of the importance which, in past centuries, has been attached to this exercise, and among the rules printed by Raikes for use in some of the earliest of his Sunday-schools, I find this one, that the scholars "shall assemble at church on the second evening of every month, at six o'clock, to be examined and to hear a plain exposition of the catechism, which the minister will endeavor to give them."[1] How powerfully the catechism which formed part of the "New England Primer" influenced the first settlers in the eastern part of America, I need only remind you. It was taught in the day-schools and as regularly recited there, down to times comparatively modern, "as Webster's Spelling Book or Murray's English Grammar."[2] On the Sunday afternoons appointed for saying the catechism, the meeting-house would be crowded with anxious parents and sympathizing friends, while the minister, standing in the pulpit, put out the questions to the children in order, and each one, when the question came to him, was expected to wheel out of the line of scholars into the broad aisle and face the minister and make his very best obeisance and answer the question put to him without the slightest mistake.[3]

It is easy to see how the use of the catechism

[1] Gregory, p. 151. [2] Dorus Clarke, p. 18. [3] *Ibid.*, p. 17.

would be first abused and would then decline, how it would become formal and meaningless when the fire was dying out at the heart of the church; but I think that it would be hard to show any substitute for it which is worthy of taking its place. The Assembly's catechism still seems to me to remain peerless, and after careful examination of many of its forerunners and successors, down to the "Evangelical Free Church Catechism," published by a kind of ecclesiastical syndicate in Great Britain, there is no other compendium of Bible truth which appears to be at all comparable with it. Admitting, as it does, of ready modification to meet the needs of the age, I believe that if a catechism is to be used in our schools at all, it will be on the lines of this historic manual.

Were a catechism introduced, it would be the minister who would have to teach it. To do so would form part of his work in the Sunday-school. A few minutes each Sunday, or a monthly exercise of perhaps a quarter of an hour, would suffice. Everything would depend on the way in which he carried the exercise through. If well done, he and the people committed to his care might come to agree with John Owen, the Puritan, when he says: "More knowledge is ordinarily diffused, especially among the young and ignorant, by one hour's catechetical exercise than by many hours' continual discourse."

Before leaving this part of our subject, I may be allowed to suggest that at all events the minister will do well now and then to offer prizes to the scholars who pass the best examinations, oral or written, in the lessons of a given period. This plan has been successfully adopted in England and much can be said in its favor. Certainly it is to be regretted that our elaborate system of Sunday-school lessons does not oftener cumulate at some visible point and show some appreciable achievement.

We now come to a question of no little moment to the minister in the Sunday-school. Should he himself teach? The ancient teaching, we must remember, was all based on the catechism and it was conducted by the priest or pastor. Now that we have wisely distributed the teaching office and enlarged it so materially, is the minister to have no part in it? Luther, in common with others of the Reformers, was emphatic in his insistence on the duty of the preacher to be a teacher also. He held that a bishop ought to give proof before *being* a bishop that he had aptness to teach. Many of the popes have served this same apprenticeship, and the present Archbishop of Canterbury was famous in his earlier years as the greatest successor to Thomas Arnold in the head-mastership of Rugby School.

Yet I should be inclined to say that, with one

exception, to which I am about to allude, the minister had better not have a class in the Sunday-school. His exposition of the lesson in the previous week will have fitted him to teach, and it will be well for him to be ready to fill the vacant chair of some absent teacher,—to carry, in fact, a roving commission, which will allow him to become acquainted with every part of his school.

The exception, the only exception, that I make to this, is in favor of a Bible class for young men. With the utmost advantage he may gather about him, if he be equal to doing so, those to whom the poet's words apply—"Shades of the prison-house begin to close upon the growing boy." The most serious trouble with our Sunday-school system is that it does not prove more successful in retaining the older scholars, and especially the lads who openly boast that they are no longer boys and yet secretly fear that they are not quite men. The leakage between the school and the church is heaviest here. From eighteen to twenty-eight, is, as Doctor Cuyler says, the golden age of opportunity. It is commonly the decisive decade also. "If a young man reaches thirty without giving his heart to Christ, he has missed his best time, and from that date onward the chances of conversion (humanly speaking), diminish in a geometric ratio." Then, very often comes the time when the growing boy, begins to lose his interest

in the school. If he is taught in the main room this is especially the case. And unless something is done, within a few months he may be drifting away. It is of him that Mr. Spurgeon is thinking when he says, "A link must be found between the senior scholars and the public means of grace, or else Sunday-school work will be pouring water into a leaking bucket." On the other hand, the boys of fifteen or sixteen, if retained, interested and brought to religious decision, will be the very life-blood of the church twenty years hence. I shall be forgiven if I say that I am now speaking from personal experience. A young men's Bible class which I began and maintained in one of our Eastern cities, teaching it in a separate room immediately after the morning service, was more productive of good than any other one feature in my ministry there. It grew in numbers and was organized as a society, and when last I heard of it it was flourishing still. Numbers of its members were added to the church. It became a power in the community, and business men in search of young men to fill places in their offices or stores often turned to that class first of all. "It would be impossible," the minister wrote a few years since, "even to name all the advantages which have come to our own church, to other churches, and to the young men of the city, through the agency of the society."

The minister should have such a class in his school. Rather than let it fall into incompetent hands, he should teach it himself. The actual teaching need be all that he does. The president and other officers of the class should be chosen by popular vote. But as a teacher he must bring himself face to face with his young men. He must be considerate, sympathetic, and perfectly honest. He will find that his scholars often break upon him "with very tough questions, questions that wear a considerable looking toward infidelity." [1] He may well teach his lips to say, "I do not know." Any assumption of the dogmatist will close the mouth of some young questioner, but it will not convince his mind. It will only alienate his heart. Yet the pastor will do well to remember the golden words which Dr. Marcus Dods once spoke to just such a class which he taught after his Sunday afternoon service in Glasgow. "The Bible was given more for our edification than for polemical purposes."

So one aim should be never lost sight of. I mean the religious decision of each young man in the class. Having won their confidence, the minister may readily find an occasion to talk with those who are not already Christians, and discuss with them their difficulties, explain the matters which may perplex them, and so win them to the

[1] Bushnell, p. 378.

Saviour. He may (if he is wise he will) get the Christian young men in his class to help him in this important matter. The remarkable success of the "Young Men's Baraca Union of America," which sprang into existence from the conversation of four members of a Bible class for young men with their teacher when he was concerned at the few conversions for the large amount of work expended, is proof how much can be done here. That teacher writes to me:[1] "The Baraca now numbers three hundred classes in thirty-four States and Canada, and is growing rapidly. One hundred and fifteen of my own class have joined my church." I would advise every student for the Christian ministry to obtain the literature in reference to this very interesting organization, and even at the risk of adding another society to his list, to associate himself with it.

So much then for the work which the minister may do in his school as a channel for information. Let him not fear lest this interest in the young people of his charge should prove too heavy a tax. On the contrary, it will keep him vigorous and young himself. He will find his enthusiasm a tonic. The preparation class of the week will furnish him the material for the Bible class on the Sunday. The fellowship of young and ardent

[1] M. A. Hudson, 200 Comstock Ave., Syracuse, N. Y., June, 1899. Comp. "The Standard," June 1889, p. 11.

hearts will do him good; the fresh angles, sometime very acute and sometimes very obtuse, at which truth is seen will cause him to understand how much, and how little too, there often is to the human mind; and the growth of his church in the stalwart and energetic blood of the coming generation will round out to its completion the great aspiration of the psalmist: "Both young men and maidens, old men and children, let them praise the name of the Lord." [1]

At this point I wish to recall the fine prophetic phrase of John Wesley when he beheld in the Sunday-school of the coming era "nurseries for Christians." No prophecy has ever received richer fulfillment. Of no other enterprise of the Christian church has it been more true to say, "This and that man was born in her; and the Highest himself shall establish her." The moral and the intellectual influences of the Sunday-school fall short of their noblest end, they fail to touch the high-water mark of their fullest power, unless some distinct effort be made to crown each life with complete consecration to Christ. The Sunday-school is a reforming and informing agency; but, more than this, it is under God a transforming power. And here it is that the minister should do his best work.

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[1] Ps. 148 : 12.

I have already counseled the minister to be in the Sunday-school every Sunday. "Frequently," said Mr. Spurgeon to one of his students, "visit your Sabbath-schools, if it is only to walk through them."[1] Of a devoted English clergyman, his friend writes: "I remember hearing him say in the Sunday-school that, during the whole of six and twenty years, except when away on his official duties at Chester Cathedral, he had only twice failed to be present in the school by at least two minutes before the regular hour for opening on Sunday morning."[2] I make this point again, and in this place, because of what has to be said about the minister as a spiritual force in the life of the school. If he is rarely seen there, his occasional presence will either be passed over with indifference, or associated in the minds of teachers and scholars with a kind of officialism. He will have come only to do his duty, or perhaps to make a formal attack on their souls.

Let the minister be there regularly, and he will be what every minister should aim to be, namely, the pastor of the school. Dr. S. G. Green, in his lectures on "Christian Ministry to the Young,"[3] speaks of one pastor who "conducted the opening service of the school weekly for many years. The teachers and children knew they would meet their

[1] "Reminiscences of C. H. Spurgeon," by W. Williams, p. 194.
[2] Davies, "Successful Preachers," p. 278. [3] Green, p. 182.

minister there at nine on Sunday morning, and the consequence was a regularity and fullness of attendance hardly to be paralleled under ordinary circumstances."

Without going the length of Dr. Stephen Tyng, of New York, who believed in the minister "taking the pastoral charge and superintendence of his own school," I should say with him that it is the minister's duty "to give his mind and time and presence and actual labor, to the work of saving and teaching the children of his flock." [1]

I mention three essentials to success in this work.

The first is pastoral sympathy. The minister must be there as the mother is in her nursery, because he loves to be, and indeed cannot stay away. No doubt there are men to whom this comes more easily than it does to others. Dogs and children, it is said, make few mistakes in their judgment of people. There are ministers and men, not only of great eloquence, but of genuine kindness of heart too, who are not at home among children. But they are the exceptions. There are others again of whom it is true to say that they seem never to have been children themselves. They were born old, and swaddled in buckram. To them a healthy, vigorous, demonstrative boy is

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[1] "Forty Years' Experience," etc., p. 196.

like a Fourth of July every day, no one can tell when he will go off, or what mischief he will do when he explodes. Such men may have their place in the ministry, alas, who has not? but not in the Sunday-school. The first qualification for pastoral success among the young is for the pastor to be himself young at heart.

The second is, pastoral knowledge. Let the minister cultivate the art of remembering names. His visits to the homes will help him here. And when he fails, a little tact may be used to bring him the information he needs. Jonathan Edwards might be allowed to ask the same boy his name twice in the course of an hour, receiving in response to his question, put a second time, "Whose boy are you?" the answer, "Noah Holmes' boy, sir, the same boy that I was an hour ago"; but it is not allowed to many of us to forget and to be forgiven as was he. It will gain ready access to the hearts of our young people if we know their names, their homes, and some point in the life or tastes of each which shall particularize every case, and make each one stand, if not on his own merits, which might be an insufficient footing for many of them, at all events on his own individuality.

To pastoral sympathy and pastoral knowledge, it is natural to add pastoral oversight. Doctor Tyng, looking in at the door of his main Sunday-school room at St. George's, New York, could say

with honest pride, as his glance swept over all the classes of that busy throng: "Every teacher in that room started under my eye as a scholar in the infant class. I have trained them all myself; and I know them all; and they know me. They are my children in the faith." This is a rare case, of course, and yet measurably it may be true of the minister that by his presence, his sympathy, his careful attention to his school, he may gain a power over it which shall make him the overseer, the bishop indeed. In one direction, certainly, he will need to be vigilant. Around the Sunday-school, as around the outer courts about the temple at Jerusalem, grow up organizations of many kinds. Boys' Brigades, in which Henry Drummond placed more faith than most of us do; church guilds, for more purposes than I have time to enumerate; Baraca bands; prayer circles; Bible reading alliances; these and many others have trained themselves about the parent trunk until sometimes you cannot see the tree for leaves. My present contention is that none of these should be allowed to grow away from the minister's oversight. He will need, if he watches for souls as one that must give account, to use each of them as a channel of spiritual influence.

The man who in his early ministry won for himself the title of "the model preacher of Connecticut," and who later achieved as honorable a

success in St. Louis, I mean Dr. Constans L. Goodell, was the ideal Sunday-school pastor. Few left his church after the morning service, almost the whole congregation, with additions from the younger children, took part in the after hour of Bible study. He says:[1] "The pastor will reach the children through the Bible-school. That is not the children's church, but it is the church and pastor mingling with the children, and laying out all their experience and wisdom and spiritual power on them for their instruction in righteousness. The pastor is always in the Bible-school. He thus brings the adults and youth together, retaining the older scholars in the school . . . all bound together by mutual interest. The Sabbath-school becomes a constant feeder of the church, and the church becomes a garden enclosed about the children. Is not this God's order?"

This was the man who won the children's hearts as Jesus did, not with treats and presents and cheap pleasantries, but with the gracious and sympathetic spirit of the kingdom of heaven itself. And we do not wonder when his biographer tells us that "when Doctor Goodell died, a little boy of another church and Sunday-school, ran home and said to his mother, 'Oh, mamma, the children's friend is dead!'"

[1] "The Advance," May 24, 1888.

We have now reached the key to the situation, and must condense, on the minister putting forth all his influence in the school for the spiritual welfare of the scholars.

The first essential is that between the pastor and the teachers in the school there should be the heartiest sympathy in this matter; I am almost tempted to say that the one thing needful in a Sunday-school teacher is that he should be "a Christian, and a Christian of a pronounced type; not one whose conduct belies his doctrine, for God, looking through the eyes of a little child, will be quick to detect that; not one who is perfunctory in his attendance, considering it a tax or a condescension; but one who acts from the highest motives. It is a mistake to think any one will do for a Sunday-school teacher. He ought to be selected from the saintliest and best and wisest of the church."[1]

Paul writing to Philemon sends greeting "to the church in thy house." That teacher is happy who has a church in his class, and who meeting with those who have made a religious decision unites with them in prayer and conference for the conversion of the rest. Now and then the pastor also will do wisely to meet with them. Let him feel the pulse of each class.

[1] Rev. George Short, B. A.

"The Society of Christian Endeavor," or its equivalent, in the church, should be kept in close touch with the spiritual condition of the school. That organization, however new and original in its title and machinery, is in spirit one with organizations which have long been in healthful operation in many of our British and New England churches.[1] They are the safest nurseries for Christian culture. It matters little what name they bear, or what is the special apparatus with which they work; badges and buttons are sometimes foolish enough; the weeds of laws and by-laws may, if mistaken for the essentials, spring up and choke the free and healthful growth of the good seed of the kingdom; but the society of young people banded together for a vigorous and persistent endeavor after the divine life, is necessary to the highest welfare of the church and the school. The pastor should be present, rather however to suggest than to control at the religious meetings of his young people. It is these gatherings that are likely to register the rise of spiritual fervor, the tides of the Spirit, which taken at the flood carry him and his people out into the deep seas of religious prosperity.

The Sunday-school in which the minister keeps the subject of religious decision prominent in private conversation and in public appeals, will be

[1] Trumbull, p. 293.

the school best prepared for such special efforts as ought occasionally to be made for the conversion of the unconverted in the classes. It will be borne in upon him at certain times, or it will become the conviction of the most earnest and devoted of his teachers, or perhaps the solicitude of a mother for the conversion of her boy may be the single incentive to it, but in one or another way he will become impressed with the feeling that the school is ripening for a harvest.

The history of religious revivals is closely connected with the history of Sunday-schools. The spiritual dearth of the middle of the eighteenth century was broken up by the great religious awakening in New England and Great Britain. At once the heart of the church was moved to solicitude for the conversion of children. There were obstacles of traditionalism to be met and swept away, of course. But with clear and open vision the master minds, from John Wesley to Lyman Beecher, saw in that widespread quickening their opportunity, and with an intense and unabated passion drove toward it.[1] To the loving nature of Wesley, the Sunday-school seemed "one of the noblest specimens of charity which has been set on foot since the Norman conquest"; and that hero of a hundred revivals, Doctor Lyman Beecher, lived

[1] Tyerman's "Wesley," Vol. III., p. 522.

to see the prophecies of his earlier years as to Sabbath-schools more than realized.[1] In Scotland, among a people excessively conservative of ancestral faith and traditional practice, Thomas Chalmers, perhaps the greatest of all her reformers, beheld in the Sunday-school the new power which would stem the woful degeneracy going on in the religious habit and character of the country, and he challenged the parents of his native land "to regard a well-conducted Sabbath-school in any other light than as a blessing and an acquisition to their children." [2]

Without adding to their testimonies, I need only appeal to our own experience. Is it not true that the Sunday-school in every large and vigorous Christian church has at intervals a time of special religious revival? And on the conduct of the services at such seasons, does not the future, not of the school alone but also of the church itself, largely depend? Pastoral responsibility is never a reality more serious than now. I urge upon the minister respect for "the soul of the child." In the special services which you hold with the scholars dread nothing more than injuring the natural delicacy of a young faith. "Let the preacher," says Dr. S. G. Green, "beware of arousing emotions and demonstrations after which almost anything

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[1] Trumbull, p. 124. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 162.

must be an anti-climax"; and he cautions us against such exhibitions as impair the modesty of childhood, and minister either to thoughtlessness or irreverence or both.[1]

What services in all the ministry of the word call for greater delicacy of touch than these? For what does one need more the prepared heart, the heart of the Christ of the children? We are to deal with the plastic nature of childhood, the impressionable nature of youth. Already in some hearts the hardening processes are going on. Some are even now feeling the first dim fascination of the evils that are in the world. To win the children for Christ has been the aim of the wisest of men and women in the church universal through all time. If St. Francis Xavier cries:[2] "Give me the children until they are seven years old, and any one may take them afterward," none the less urgent is Luther's tone as he says: "Young children and scholars are the seed and the source of the church." We listen to Cardinal Manning when he declares: "Give me the children and England shall be Catholic in twenty years," only to draw from his words a still loftier courage as sweeping a far wider area we dare assert: "Give the children to Christ, and in twenty years the world shall be Christian." A child's theology may not be

[1] "Lectures on Sunday-school," p. 181.
[2] Trumbull, pp. 67, 71.

the theology of the churches which embodies itself in the creeds of Christendom, but we know little of the child's heart until we have found that there is in it the possibility of a consciousness of wrong-doing, a sorrow for sin, a desire to change, and a love for the Saviour quickened by the sense of a need of him. The religion of the child is not entirely emotional, and when boyhood and girlhood are reached there is an ability to grasp and to apply the simple theology of the New Testament, which is as real in its spirit and as clear in its mental apprehension as that which comes in later years. The little child is the ideal of the believer, and rises before us through all the centuries with the arms of Jesus about him as the model for him who would enter the kingdom of God; and we know that that kingdom is "righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost." In what we have to say, therefore, during a time of special spiritual interest in the Sunday-school, let us not deal only in the anecdotal. Illustrate truth by all means, but first make quite plain the truth we propose to illustrate.

The beginning of these special efforts for the conversion of the scholars should be as quiet and natural as possible. Some Sunday morning or afternoon when the signs are favorable, having previously obtained the consent of the superintendent, let the regular exercises of the school be

so arranged that the last ten minutes can be given to the pastor. Let him talk at once, directly, with great plainness and earnestness, upon the need for personal salvation and the opportunity for it. Let him call for manifestations of religious decision. Methods will vary, but the thing itself is what is aimed at. Let this meeting lead to others, still more distinctly evangelistic in their character. I think that a gathering of those whose hearts are touched may be appointed for that same Sunday, in the afternoon, or let them come to the meeting of the young people in the evening. Have two or three meetings in the week. Keep them clear of all formality, and in all let there be a wise but vigorous drawing of the net.

Let none underrate the importance of such a time of religious awakening. It cannot be summoned at will. It cannot be got up at the bidding of a peripatetic evangelist. It has as little in common with the mechanical artifices of the worked-up revival as the natural motions of the human body have with the wooden gestures of a painter's dummy. Let the pastor take the work very seriously, for is it not his? As truly as any scholar in the school he can pray for himself:

> Gentle Jesus, meek and mild,
> Look upon a little child;
> Pity my simplicity,
> Suffer me to come to thee.

With as genuine a humility as Solomon's can he plead: "O Lord, my God, thou hast made thy servant king: . . and I am but a little child: I know not how to go out or come in." [1] The consciousness of ignorance is a good sympton in teacher as well as in scholar. It is the first step toward enlightenment. Margaret Fuller was always cheered when any of her pupils wrote to her saying that they felt their ignorance. She would label such letters "under conviction."

Now, if ever, the familiar saying, "The Sunday-school is the nursery of the church," will take on a very solemn and inspiring purport. The minister will repeat it to himself in this new atmosphere of experiences, and in the clear, resonant air it will carry a pressure of meaning bordering on the sublime. Should he be so happy as to remain with one church for many years, or at any rate to keep track of it, he will as time goes on see the fruitage of efforts which, when he put them forth, seemed just as natural as breathing, and the contrast will come home to him between the simple letting fall of the seed from the hand of the sower, and the golden glory of the harvest, by and by. I shall not be chargeable with exaggeration if I say that to the Sunday-school and to the honest work of teachers and pastor for the religious decision of

[1] 1 Kings 3 : 7.

the scholars, we are indebted for the devoted lives of many of the very best who are serving the church of Christ to-day. Our elders and deacons and office-bearers, our wisest superintendents, and our most earnest and intelligent teachers, were born again in the Sunday-school. They have given back to her what she first gave them, good measure pressed down and running over. And what shall I say as to the service which the Sunday-school has rendered to the Christian ministry? What need that I say anything when the ranks of every theological seminary, the record of every pulpit, the annals of every mission field are ready with their witnesses? Professor Drummond found, as the result of his inquiries of a number of missionaries, that the average age at which they began to think of the foreign field was when they were thirteen years old; and had his inquiries been pushed farther and carried over a still wider range, I believe the result would have confirmed the conviction, which has grown in my mind to a certainty, that the Sunday-school is the place where first the future minister or missionary hears the voice of the Lord, and where earliest comes the response, "Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth."

I would close what has been said on this subject with two words of counsel. First, let none be hasty in bringing the scholars into the church. There should be some equivalent in every denom-

ination for the primitive catechumen class, for the confirmation class of the Episcopalian Church, and for the probationary training given in other communions. The main thing for us is to make good work. Once a week, for some time, let the pastor meet the candidates for church-membership from among the scholars, and have personal conversation with them one by one. The annual loss from our church lists is, I am persuaded, due in a large measure to the lack of careful preparatory training.

It is due also to the absence of after training, and so I would further advise that the pastor meet the young members of the church for brief courses on such subjects as the elements of religion, the meaning of the Christian ordinances, the history of the religious denomination to which they have attached themselves, and their duties and privileges as members of a local church. "Precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little." It is hard to clear the minister of responsibility for very much of the defection in the ranks of church-membership when we reflect how remiss he has been here. To bring into the church is good; but to keep in the church is better; and yet in his eagerness to swell the numbers of the fellowship how often the minister overlooks the other end of the procession, and fails to

notice that the untrained and the ill-fed are falling away as fast as the new recruits are coming in. Christian nurture is a minister's duty as well as converting zeal. "Take heed therefore unto all the flock over which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood."

Between the home and the school there will be no rivalry if the pastor's interests are given to the one as much as to the other. They are but separate rooms in one house. The early practice, as we have seen, was for the father to be priest as well as patriarch in his own household. And in theory the belief lingered into our own century that parents spent some time, certainly, on Sunday, in instructing their children. How sincere the objection to the Sunday-school on the ground that it usurped this parental duty and left the infant Moses to the mercies of the Nile it is not necessary for us to determine. It was heard most loudly in an age of general parental neglect, and sometimes it was raised by the clergy who were jealous lest the office of the sponsor and of the minister should be set aside. Yet it is in evidence that the Sunday-school was forced into existence by parental and priestly neglect. Alike the home instruction and the parochial system had failed in the cities of England, as Raikes found when he was appalled at the profligacy of the chil-

dren in Gloucester, and in the rural districts as Hannah More discovered when the rich farmer in one village assured her that "religion would be the ruin of agriculture, that it was a very dangerous thing, and had produced much mischief ever since it was introduced by the monks down at Glastonbury."[1] I have little belief in the honesty of this sudden access of parental virtue which had to be met in Scotland, for example, by the fervid eloquence of Chalmers arguing that the alternative was "not whether the rising generation should be trained to Christianity in schools or trained to it under the roof of their fathers; but whether they shall be trained to it in schools or not trained at all."[2] I say I have little belief in the honesty of this objection to Sunday-schools when I learn that, at the time when they were founded, in Scotland the immorality in the homes of the upper classes and the wretchedness of the hovels of the poor defied description; that in Ireland even the children of Protestants were "no better than heathen"; that in England, William Wilberforce was shocked at finding that within three miles of a cathedral city every house in one village, and that a sample of all the rest, was a scene of the greatest ignorance and vice; and that in America, while skepticism was as much the fashion in the

[1] "Mendip Annals," p. 14. [2] Trumbull, pp. 160–162.

colleges as though it had been a species of athletics, among the descendants of the Pilgrims, religious instruction in the family and in the church had so far declined that Lyman Beecher declared that "the result was a band of infidels and heretics and profligates." [1] The fact is, that the Sunday-school, so far from usurping the place of home, has made it in many instances sweet home, and has restored to it the sanctities and endearments of which irreligion had threatened to despoil it.

And if the Sunday-school has not put itself in rivalry with the home, equally true is it to assert that it has not put itself in rivalry with the church. Occasionally some champion of the exclusive spiritual prerogative of the clergy—a survival of the Dark Ages—raises his voice in honest but bigoted warning. The Sunday-school is arraigned because of "incompetence of the teachers to give religious instruction, because it is destructive of church-going, and because it has done much to destroy parental responsibility and priestly obligation." [2] And all the time the Roman Catholic hierarchy declares that it is the divinely constituted guardian of faith and morals. Against those claims, which are as dangerous to civil liberty as they are to religious progress, the Sunday-school may build an effectual barrier.[3]

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[1] Trumbull, p. 167.

[2] 1899.

[3] Dr. R. W. Dale's "Life," p. 286.

In the Old World, as every reader of the history of the eighteenth century knows, the Sunday-school has been one of the most powerful agencies for reviving the church. It has kindled the zeal of both the clergy and the laity. It has made religion, as it is embodied in a visible fellowship, a necessary element in the life of the people. And in America the Sunday-school has led in the westward march of emigration, and the Sunday-school Union alone for three-quarters of a century has been organizing neighborhood Sunday-schools at the average rate of three every day.[1] From the school has grown the church, and the one has as truly been the precursor of the other, as Caxton's printing press was the precursor of Tyndale's English Bible.

How much the school has done for the church by renewing her youth I need not say. What the author of "Alice in Wonderland"—in whom "the boy never quite left the man"—said of the world at large we can say of thousands of vigorous and prosperous churches: "It is the glory of the world that there is a perpetual succession of happy young life, given to pour fresh blood into the sluggish veins of humanity and set its heart beating again with that hopefulness which is God's best gift. The heaviest curse which he could lay upon us would be to keep us living on forever in

[1] Trumbull, p. 189.

a world in which no new life was seen and to let the human race grow older without sending young faces to brighten its weary visions, and remind it of its own childhood. We should get mad and savage enough to devour each other at last, if the children did not come to keep us sane and fill us with gentler thoughts; they give us something to work for when we are tired of working for ourselves; they refurnish our world with new hopes when all our dear old hopes are dead; they make us believe in God again when the sorrows of life have driven us faithless; and they help to keep us in the better way for their sake, when if we thought only of ourselves we might drift into the evil way. What are they but his jewels of bright, celestial worth? What are they but ladders set up from heaven to earth?"[1]

I believe that it would be capable of proof that the children have done fully as much for the church as the church has done for the children. If the school is the pioneer of the sanctuary in many a wild Western settlement, equally is it, to every Christian fellowship, the adjunct aiming to introduce the entire congregation, young and old, to systematic Bible study, and the feeder bringing to it from the world about it the new blood by which its life is to be sustained.

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[1] Lewis Carroll.

VII

THE SUNDAY-SCHOOL AND THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

The Sunday-school must be in touch with the times. Signs of dissatisfaction. Criticism. To keep abreast of the new century the Sunday-school must (1) respond to its inevitable demands—life centering in great cities, danger of the Sunday-school growing away from the people ; (2) fall in with the philanthropic sentiment of the century ; (3) sympathize with the religious thought of the century—the emphasis on the life that now is as determining the life that is to come ; (4) avail itself of the progressive intelligence of the century—the model school, the building, officers, new methods, teachers, classes, teaching.

Conclusion : The minister lives for the future in caring for the young life of the congregation.

VII

THE SUNDAY-SCHOOL AND TWENTIETH CENTURY

Our study of the Sunday-school would not be complete without a forward glance over the century whose threshold we have so lately crossed. To this we turn in conclusion. The modern Sunday-school is already more than a hundred years old. Both the experimental stage and the stage of reaction from the first enthusiasm have been safely survived. From the beginning the movement had in it elements which augured well for its permanence. Its first leaders might be opposed, but they could not be despised. An enterprise which enlisted the active devotion of Raikes, with his business sagacity, of Hannah More, with her brilliant social charm, of Charles of Bala, with his apostolic zeal, of William Wilberforce, the peer of William Pitt for eloquence, and of John Wesley, the foremost religious leader of the century, was bound to succeed. Its founders were not fanatics nor visionaries. They were eminently sane and practical, and their intellects were as keen as their affections were warm.

The closing years of the eighteenth century

saw the rise of the modern Sunday-school. The first half of the nineteenth gave to it shape, uniting its range, concentrating its powers, and organizing its forces. To the second half of the nineteenth century fell the still harder task of improving the teaching in the Sunday-school, and here it was the Americans outstripped all others and furnished Sunday-school literature which is incomparably superior to that of any other country.

That the Sunday-school still falls short of what it might be is evident enough. It must keep in the full current of the century if it is to live and to fulfill its high destiny. Perhaps it is a matter for congratulation, rather than for complaint, that the truest friends of the Sunday-school movement are the frankest of its critics. No more than any other institution is it secure against the tendency to fossilize.

Many of the best and ablest leaders in the affairs of God, says one writer,[1] are vigilant and vigorous in devising and applying new ideas to the system as it is in vogue. The process has been in the main one of graft upon an unpruned stock, and the result a rather elaborate and, perhaps, not altogether homogeneous and healthy organism. The feeling lives and grows that the institution not only is imperfect, but is falling short of that degree of efficiency which fairly should be looked for in an institution of so important professed mission. In the average Sunday-school

[1] W. H. S. Demarest, "The Presbyterian Review," Jan. 7, 1901.

there are unquestioned defects in work and lack of results.

The Sunday-school of the twentieth century must be kept abreast of the times. How shall this be done?

We answer, first, by responding to the inevitable demands of the century. When Raikes first drew public attention to the work which was being done in his school he laid the chief stress on the country and not on the city life, which it aimed to reform.

> Farmers and other inhabitants of the towns and villages complain that they receive more injury in their property on the Sabbath than all the week beside. This, in a great measure, proceeds from the lawless state of the younger class, who are allowed to run wild on that day, free from every restraint. To remedy this evil, persons duly qualified are employed to instruct those that cannot read ; and those that may have learnt to read are taught the catechism and conducted to church.[1]

Although his work began in a city, it was a city of no great size, and England was still a rural community. This is no longer the case in the Old World, and still less is it the case in the New. Human life is more and more centering in cities. The Sunday-school of the time in which we live must not be suffered to grow away from the masses of the people. It must not yield to the

[1] "Gloucester Journal," Nov. 3, 1783.

temptation to which too many churches have yielded and move off from the crowded courts and congested tenements. It must march with the wholesome impulse which is now working in university settlements, and multiplying Christian agencies in the machinery of what is not very happily termed the institutional church. We cannot afford to lose sight of the class on whose behalf Sunday-schools were first started in the lanes of Gloucester and the hamlets of Cheddar, and for whom Charles Dickens, half a century after, so well pleaded when he raised his voice in favor of what he was the first to call "Ragged Schools." The Sunday-school must not be allowed to narrow down to a club for the children of the congregation; it must hold to its original democratic character, and welcome alike the rich and the poor, in the conviction that the Lord is the Maker of them all.

Then the Sunday-school must keep abreast of the times by falling in with the prevailing sentiment of the century. There is a growing feeling, the civilized world over, that we are part of a great human brotherhood, that we are our brother's keeper. Philanthropy, unless we misread the signs of the times, is to be one of the distinctive features of this new age. To it we are impelled by the crowded city life in which the majority of men and women pass their days, as well as by the in-

creasing acquaintance with the conditions of this life, for which we are indebted to our newspapers and periodical literature. It was a journalist, remember, who first established a Sunday-school, and no ordained Christian pastor ever carried within his breast a more sympathizing heart than did he. Robert Raikes was full of love for the bodies and minds and souls of the children of Gloucester. In the very age which gave us modern missions he, in the true missionary spirit, gave us Sunday-schools. To him, first of all, we owe it that, as Dr. H. Clay Trumbull says, "A child is a great deal bigger than he was a century ago. He has grown more than a hundred years since then. Conspicuous among the features of progress in this century is the recognition of the child in his relative importance before the thinkers and doers of the Christian church and of the outside world." "He had a good way with children," said an old woman recalling Robert Raikes; "he had authority with him, and yet they were not afraid." It is impossible to calculate how much this one man increased the sum of human happiness. The love for the masses perishing in ignorance in England which burned in the bosom of Wesley, and for the millions dying in heathenism in India which glowed in the heart of Carey, and for the thousands and tens of thousands of prisoners mouldering in fetid dungeons which mastered the soul of John How-

ard, the true philanthropy which, flow in what channels it may, comes first of all from God, who is its source, this it was which became the master passion in the life of Robert Raikes. In the next century it found its most illustrious champion in Lord Shaftesbury, but he was only one of a band of devoted men and women who gave themselves up to the betterment of their kind. To-day this philanthropy is not only pouring out its wealth as never before, but better yet, it is following in the very footsteps of Him who, not satisfied with sending others, himself came to seek and to save the lost. "The world for Christ in this century" is the watchword of the new philanthropy, which means also "Christ for the world." There is significance in the fact that the work of the leading evangelist of our times, as his course of usefulness drew to its close, more and more took on the form of work for the young life of his country, first building and endowing for it schools, and later yet, reaching it in the colleges and inspiring it to volunteer for missions to the uttermost parts of the earth.

The Sunday-school must, still further, keep abreast of the times by sympathizing with the religious thought of the century. It does not imply that there has been any radical change in theology because our age differs from that which preceded it in the degree of emphasis which it

lays on certain truths. What Henry Melvill said of the Tree of Life is also true of our Christian faith: "You cannot come out of season to it. You may bring your season with you, and the tree takes it, and bears another fruit." Each age finds there the fruit best suited to your needs. Wisely says the Talmud: "Do not confine your children to your own learning, for they were born in another time." "Every age must have its own forms of Christian language and thought. Our children's children will not use the exact dialect in which we speak one with another of eternal things. Theological systems are the construction of the age, and every generation may be left to build its own."[1] Each century is tolerably sure to give prominence to those aspects of eternal truths which specially meet its needs. When the hosts of the enemy are still on the horizon, the besieged garrison is on the ramparts, but when they are swarming about the moat and drawbridge, the battlements will not need to be manned so strongly as the foundations. A hundred years ago the disposition was to emphasize the future life and the need of salvation now for the sake of that; and to-day the disposition is to emphasize the present life, and to urge men to "a new and larger conception of what the salvation of a soul must

[1] "Christianity and the Child"; W. Brock, in "The Ancient Faith in Modern Light," p. 350.

mean." The Sunday-school teacher will be likely to feel the influence of this shifted emphasis. And so the present life of the scholar, his conduct and character, will become not less momentous in his eyes than will his future destiny. He cannot consent to separate the two. His experience in the school and in the world about him bears witness that whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap. The minister, also, in his work in the Sunday-school, will do the same. How to seize, retain, and mold the life which is maturing in his school and congregation is one of the most serious problems before the twentieth century minister. All the more serious is it because the age of compulsion in which Sunday-schools were born is forever past. The old authority, which counted for so much in the home of a hundred years ago, in the Old Country, has scarcely a parallel among us to-day. He is no true pastor who does not give himself with all his strength to retaining the young people in his congregation. "The fact remains that a large proportion of Sunday-school children graduate themselves from its halls and into life wholly separate from the church at least, and perhaps set apart to do evil."[1] It is no exceptional case which is described in the following words: "In a certain city, the number of

[1] Demarest, p. 135

men in the churches and congregations was much smaller than that of women. But in the Sunday-schools of those same churches, the number of boys was slightly in excess of the number of girls. In other words, as many boys are brought under church influence as girls; but about the age of twelve or thirteen, while the girls remain, the boys, many of them, drop out of the religious circle. It would seem, then, that the point at which especial religious effort is to be directed is the point at which the boy becomes the young man. That period passed and the boy, now the young man, still kept in the congregation, he may be expected to remain in it all his life." Our most faithful and able ministers are so impressed with the momentous issues of this present life that they are striving most earnestly to hold the young men and women in their congregations through this critical period. Robert Raikes, after trying in vain to reform criminals in the jail for thirty years, resolved that prevention must be not only better but also likelier than cure. So he began at the other end, and Sunday-schools were the result. I have spoken at sufficient length of the various ways in which ministers of Christ may try to gain and keep their young people, but I should counsel that they be quick to notice any successful effort in the direction of forming closer union between the session of the school and the

session of public worship.[1] That by the working of our present arrangement of services these two are not only not mutually helpful, but often very much the reverse, is to my mind an argument for a more excellent way, if only one can be devised.

Finally, the Sunday-school must keep abreast of the times by availing itself of the progressive intelligence of the century. In nothing is this intelligence showing itself more than in the matter of education. The little red schoolhouse is a memory now, not a model. The public schools of America and the board schools of Great Britain are planned with increasing care, and serve their highest ends now as never before. Shall the building in which the Sunday-school meets still continue to recall the old familiar model of that ancient makeshift at the country cross roads? The time may come when if the whole school needs to meet for preliminary exercises—generally needlessly prolonged—the main audience room of the church will be used rather than sacrifice the space in the schoolroom proper, which should be divided so that classes can be taught without any annoyance to one by another. Each class should have its own room. The wonder is not that the work has been poorly done under the present system, but that it has been done at all.

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[1] Demarest, p. 142.

And as the plan of the building is to be followed, as far as may be, from that of the modern public school, so as in the public school where no inferior influences are suffered to interfere with the rights of the people, the choice of officers is to be of the best. The president of Chicago University is superintendent of the Sunday-school of the church of which he is a member; one of the ablest Greek scholars in the country is director of the work of instruction; a colleague of his, as able as himself, is director of the benevolent work; while the spiritual work of the school is under the direction of the minister of the church. In this school, which has done fine work in education, while the spiritual life of the pupils has been roused and quickened by constant conversions, "there are three main divisions: the elementary, embracing the kindergarten and the first four grades; the secondary, embracing eight grades; and the adult division. Each division has a principal, secretary, and one or more superintendents in charge of instruction in groups of classes, each of which, of course, has its regular teacher." These better arrangements will claim, where they do not create, new methods of teaching. There is no higher honor than to be found competent as a teacher in a Sunday-school. It was of teachers that John Wesley was thinking when he wrote to his brother Charles,

a few months before his death: "Nothing can prevent the increase of the blessed work but the neglect of the instruments; therefore be sure to watch over these with all care, that they may not grow weary in well-doing." It was one of the greatest schoolmasters of our time, Thring of Uppingham, who traced to his early experience in teaching, when he was a curate in the very country where, a century before, Sunday-schools were born, what skill he afterward used as headmaster of one of the most famous of English schools:

> Never shall I forget those schools in the suburbs of Gloucester, and their little classroom, with its solemn problem (no more difficult one in the world), how on earth the Cambridge honor man, with his success and his brain work, was to get at the minds of those little laborers' sons, with their unfurnished heads and no time to give. They had to be got at, or I had failed . . . There I learned the great secret of St. Augustine's golden key, which, though it be of gold, is useless unless it fits the wards of the lock. And I found the wards I had to fit, the wards of my lock which had to be opened, the minds of those little street boys very queer and tortuous affairs; and I had to set about cutting and chipping myself in every way to make myself into the wooden key which should have the one merit of a key, however common it might look, the merit of fitting the lock and unlocking the minds and opening the shut chambers of the heart.

The church is slowly waking up to her responsibility in the matter of training teachers to teach. The Sunday-school Commission of the Protestant

Episcopal Diocese, of New York, has taken the lead in doing this;[1] but the day cannot be far distant in which the best principles and methods of teaching will be made the subject of careful and intelligent drill in public classes for all teachers who care to attend. Summer schools for this purpose, and evening classes through the winter, will be much more general than they have been.

From the public school also we may learn to have fewer classes, larger in the number of scholars enrolled in each, and better taught. The number of scholars in the public schools, according to the United States Census, 1890–1891, was eight million three hundred and twenty-nine thousand two hundred and thirty-four, as against eight million six hundred and forty-nine thousand one hundred and thirty-one in Sunday-schools. But in the case of the public schools three hundred and sixty-eight thousand seven hundred and ninety-one teachers sufficed, whereas, with only a slightly larger number of scholars, the Sunday-schools numbered one million one hundred and fifty-one thousand three hundred and forty teachers.[2] The city of Rochester, N. Y., has more large Sunday-school classes than any other city in the United States. There are forty classes with a membership which in 1900 ran up to between three thou-

[1] "Outlook," Dec. 15, 1900.

[2] Gulick, "The Growth of the Kingdom," p. 152.

sand and four thousand men, and the explanation of this is that some of the most vigorous and competent young men in the city have devoted themselves to this work. One of these, the Hon. Walter Hubbell, alluding to the rapid growth of his class during the nine years that he has taught it, says:

> We now number two hundred and fifty, and this year, so far, we have had an average attendance of something like one hundred and fifty. I hardly know what to say in answer to the question about the methods employed in teaching. We use the International series of lessons, and I endeavor to keep closely to the text. I never discuss politics or the ordinary international, national, or social questions of the day. The class gives entertainments during the winter. The treasurer's report shows that it costs about one thousand dollars a year to run the class, including the cost of the banquet and what we pay the male quartette, which is unquestionably the best one in the city. A large number of the men seem to be very much interested in the class, and do a great deal of work, and to this fact I attribute the success of the class. We have various committees who look after the membership, who call on the sick, who attempt to find employment for the unemployed, who take care of the social functions, and who look out for the program of the general exercises on Sunday.

That the character of the teaching will rise with the growing intelligence of the teachers, goes without saying. The days of the uniform lesson are, let us hope, numbered. Lessons must be graded to the capacity of the scholars. The present

prospect is for three courses instead of one, following the classification of the school. There may be a danger that in the revulsion from the old hortatory methods of teaching we may go to an opposite extreme and become too scholastic. It was against this that so broad-minded and accurate a scholar as Dr. John A. Broadus found it necessary to protest: "The so-called inductive method of study will answer for college students and a few Bible classes, but most pupils and most teachers will never make anything of it." And certainly the minute study of the words of Scripture, the finding of concealed or unobserved truths by the close scrutiny of tenses and cases which perplexed Phillips Brooks' mother in the preaching of the new school of evangelicals of her day, will perplex much more than it will profit the ordinary scholar in a Sunday-school class. In the Sunday-school we deal not with processes so much as with results. The teacher's main aim should be moral and spiritual rather than intellectual. Not that any one of these should be rigidly separated from the others. No such distinction exists in fact. Faith and practice are complementary, the two sides of the same shield, and the reason is never ignored in the arguments and appeals of the Christian religion. The textbook in the Sunday-school is the Bible, and "the ultimate aim of the teaching is the knowledge of

Christ, Christian experience, personal salvation." [1] The school stands or falls, not by the completeness of its apparatus, its intellectual ability, the perfection of its organization, the popularity of its teachers, the social position of its scholars; no, but by its yielding results which would have satisfied Jesus himself; by the measure in which it responds to his command, "Suffer little children to come unto me, for of such is the kingdom of heaven." It was this distinctly religious purpose in the school system of the Hebrews which constituted its strength, giving so deep a meaning to the saying of one of the rabbis: "The Almighty prefers the breath of children at school to the smoke rising from the temple's altars." This it is also which has made the catechism so important an element in the national life of Scotland, of Germany, of New England, and of many other lands. The chief end of the catechism was not reached until the soul was won for God. And just here it is that the main work of the minister needs to be done. He must sow with eternity in view. I have just said that the text-book in the school has to be the Bible. By this I mean the Bible, and not selections from it or notes upon it. The demand for cheaper Bibles with which in its early years the Sunday-school Union of England and Wales be-

[1] Demarest, "Presbyterian Review," 1901, p. 130.

sieged the Bible Society, is only to be understood when we remember that a Bible was supposed to be necessary to each scholar. In England this was certainly the rule through the first half of the nineteenth century. When by and by the lesson-leaf was introduced it was considered a sign of an ill-prepared teacher that he brought it with him into the class. We have fallen on other times in this respect, and the very perfection and beauty of our Sunday-school notes, issuing from many publishing houses and creating large vested pecuniary interests, has tended to let the comment usurp the place of the book itself. A writer already quoted, in pleading for reconstruction in the Sunday-school, does not put the wound thus inflicted on the Bible in the house of its friends too strongly when he says :[1]

> The use of lesson leaves very generally so sets the Bible itself in the background as seriously to prevent familiarity with it as a whole, with the reference of its different parts to one another, and with the immediate setting and significance of the passage under study. Not only is the Bible itself thus too little in practical use, but the tearing of a few verses from it inevitably forbids the mind's emphasis and remembrance of them in scriptural oneness. It would be so in the study of any text-book.

The Bible must be restored to its place in the school, and it must be given a chance to be heard.

[1] Demarest, p. 1901.

The charge is brought against the service of public worship in many churches that it has ceased to be scriptural in thought and expression. This is much to be regretted. The question has lately been raised whether to-day the Bible is as generally familiar to us as it was to the English people in the days of Shakespeare. The vast number of references in his plays, direct or indirect, to its words and characters and incidents proves that the great body of those who saw them performed caught at once the allusions to the Bible in which they abound. The study of the Bible itself, the habit of committing its great passages to memory, the practice of comparing scripture with scripture by a ready use of parallel verses, all this needs to be revived, and the Sunday-school is one place where it can be done. Dr. John Clifford, of London, sounds a note which, without creating a panic, should certainly put us on our guard when he says :[1]

> We must get our young people to understand the incalculable value of the Bible to the religious life and general well-being of the nation, to its order and progress, to its liberty and greatness. The Bible has made us. Our Reformation sprang out of that book. It was the Bible preached by Wycliffe and his poor priests which inspired that revolt against papacy which issued at length in our departure from Rome and in the ascent of the British people to free-

[1] "Sacerdotalism and Sunday-schools," p. 14.

dom of conscience and to sovereignty in the life of the world.

What is true of England is certainly true of America also. The discovery of childhood, it has been affirmed, was the greatest discovery of the nineteenth century. This is only a rhetorical way of putting the truth which Dr. H. Clay Trumbull sets before us more soberly when he says :

> Jesus Christ not only gave children a place in his kingdom, he gave them the chief place. He did not say that if a child grew up to manhood, having kept on improving, he might come to understand God's truth ; he did say that the only way in which a mature man could understand this truth was in getting back to his child way of thinking. That this was not a mere figure of speech is shown by his having a real flesh and blood child before him when he said it. This has been a hard saying for apostles and theologians and preachers generally to realize the truth of ; but they have been making a good start the past century. There is hope of them—the most childlike.
>
> Up to the close of the eighteenth century many Christian ministers really had the idea that the chief business of the church, by the command of the Master, is to preach to grown-up persons, instead of to teach pupils in the church school, and they worked along in the line of that erroneous idea. Even if, at that time, ministers occasionally tried preaching to children, they usually failed to come up to a child's apprehension. Teaching children by proper modes of teaching was hardly attempted on any extensive scale.

No sweeping arraignment of the Sunday-school

can be just. To it, in the main, we owe it that childhood has come to its own; that the young life of the community has been nurtured and trained heavenward; that the Young Men's Christian Associations have sprung into existence in every civilized land; and that in this country alone half a million young men study the Bible in its classes every year; that the Christian Endeavor Societies belt the world; that the life of the home, the family, the community has been lifted heavenward. This unpaid enterprise can be placed side by side with any system of secular schools, and not fear by the comparison. To-day it is the most conspicuous triumph of the voluntary system in the service of Christ and the church. For this reason, and because what is good should always aim to be better, the Sunday-school ought with the new century to go up higher. If it is to keep in touch with the era of thought and action on which we have now entered, it must do so. No words of mine can impress too strongly on the minds of my readers, lay and ministerial, the grandeur and the solemnity of the obligation under which we live as servants of Jesus Christ to the children of our church. The Talmud says: "Jerusalem was destroyed because the instruction of the young was neglected." A holier temple than that which fell before the torch of Titus is the shrine which we are to guard. The late Bishop

Creighton, not thinking how near he was to the close of his career, sang on the threshold of the year in which he died:

> Oh! earlier shall the roses blow,
> In after years, those happier years;
> And children weep, when we lie low,
> Far fewer tears, far softer tears.
>
> Oh! true shall boyish laughter ring,
> Like tinkling chimes in happier times;
> And merrier shall the maidens sing,
> And I not there, and I not there.

The children's future became the thought of all others most insistent in his mind. The greatest contribution to the unborn years that a Christian minister can make he considered to be this, to live for the children who should so soon occupy our place. Our best and strongest thoughts and words fall into the hearts of the children and young people who gather about us; and because the boy is very weak who dares entirely outgrow his boyhood when he comes to be a man, there they remain, growing with his growth, strengthening with his strength, safeguards, by God's blessing, against evil, sources of inspiration, fountains of water springing up into everlasting life, like "the hymns of dear old Doctor Watts," of which in his old age Oliver Wendell Holmes wrote: "They thrilled me when a babe, and will mingle, I doubt not, with my last wandering thoughts."

In bringing this discussion to a close, I desire to do so on a note as broad as the theme itself, when looked at in all its aspects, warrants. We have seen that the roots of the Sunday-school lie far back in the early years of the human family. The work of Robert Raikes and his comrades was a revival rather than a creation. From the tent of Abraham beneath the oak at Mamre; from the divine recognition, earlier yet, of the family as the center of all civil and religious life, sprang the system of Christian nurture in which the Sunday-school is only one factor. Never is this thought of the divine sanction for the family relationship absent from the heart of the patriarch, from the song of the psalmist, from the promise of the seer, or from the prayer of the patriot. Listen to it as it welds together the training of the family with the prosperity of the nation:[1] "That our sons may be as plants grown up in their youth; that our daughters may be as cornerstones, polished after the similitude of a palace: that our garners may be full, affording all manner of store; that there be no complaining in our streets. Happy is that people, that is in such a case: yea, happy is that people, whose God is the Lord." The Hebrew theocracy in its prime insisted on the religious training of the young people, both at home and

[1] Ps. 144 : 12.

in the school, and even when Jerusalem fell, tradition has preserved for us the number of schools in the sacred city as four hundred and eighty.[1] With more probability the most profound of Jewish medieval scholars traces to the neglect of the education of the children the decline and overthrow of the theocracy itself. The lesson which the reformers of the eighteenth century spelled out from the slums of English cities and the shame of English villages, is a lesson to which every advance in national education has only added new emphasis. I mean that the religious training of the children, whether under the monarchy or the republic, is no business of the State, but must be undertaken by the church of Christ. For this training each minister is, within the sphere of his own influence, responsible. It is not the will of his Father in heaven that one of these little ones should perish, that one should grow up without the knowledge of his love and care. The same pity which stirred in the manly heart of Robert Raikes and in the gentle bosom of Hannah More should stir within the soul of the Christian minister.[2] The Sunday-school has ceased to be the property of any one class, and now belongs, as does the public school, to every family in the community. The note of the true democracy is

[1] Edersheim, "Sketches," p. 135.

[2] Dale's "Life," p. 235. P. Brooks' "Addresses," p. 503.

sounded here as it ought to be. "The rich and the poor meet together, and the Lord is the maker of them all."[1]

It has been asserted that the time in which we live is specially the age of the young; and Emerson quotes a witty physician who, remembering the hardships of his own youth, said:[2] "It is a misfortune to have been born when children were nothing and to live till men were nothing." And yet what the men shall be ten or fifteen years hence depends on what the children are now. And the children and the young people will be very largely what we make them. Addressing myself especially to the rising ministry, I would say: Believe me, brethren, standing on the threshold of your Christian ministry, you can afford to neglect almost anything sooner than the families of your congregation and the classes in your school. Beside the chair of the aged or the bed of the dying you will touch the springs of memory, and there is a wealth of experience to be gained in such ministries; but when you address yourself to this great task of Christian nurture, you are surrounded by the pleasures of hope. You "speak to the bright daylight creatures of trust," you face and influence a future of untold possibilities, you lay a molding hand on the slumbering forces of the new century

[1] Prov. 22 : 2. [2] Emerson's "Lectures," p. 307.

the like of which this world has never seen before.

> Bliss is it in this dawn to be alive,
> But to be young is very heaven.

To yourselves it will be a welcome relief, turning from the mingled experiences of the pastorate, from the man old and hardened in sin, from the man who bears

> The emptiness of ages in his face,
> And on his back the burden of the world,

from these and so many others who sadden or shadow your heart, to pass into the springtime of hope and enthusiasm as you labor with the young people in your congregation.

I offer congratulations on the prospect of this ministry to the home circle and the Sunday-school. About us as about the Master may the children gather in instinctive love; to us as to him may the young man hasten to learn how to inherit eternal life; may we, as was the Lord himself, be encircled by a band of ardent and devoted souls eager for work in the kingdom; and when the last account shall be made, may it be ours to rise with many a star in the crown of our rejoicing and to say, "Behold, here am I and the children whom the Lord hath given me."

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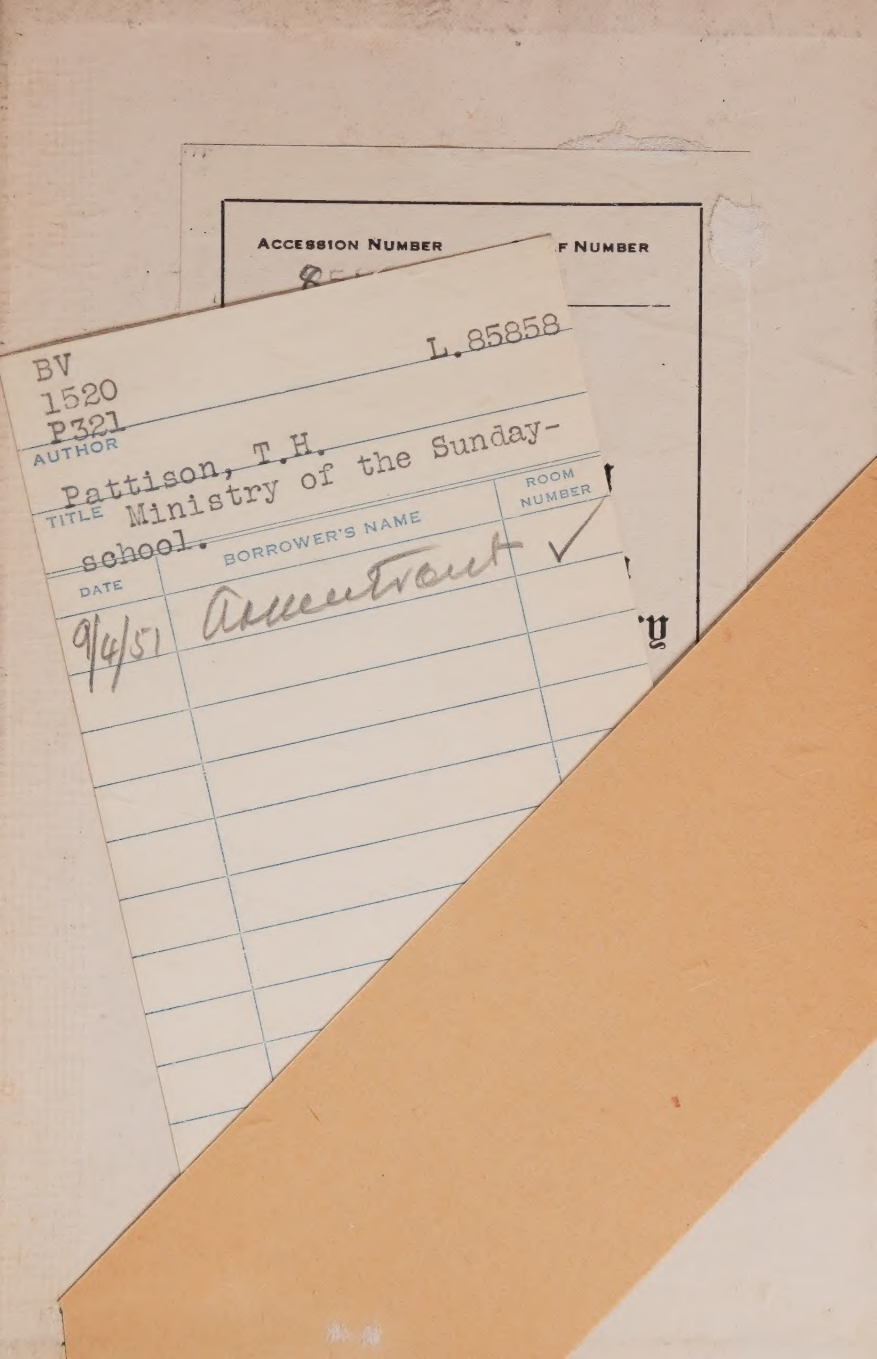
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